LOUISA.

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A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

MELISSA AND MARCIA;

OR,

THE SISTERS.

VOLUME I.

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By Mrs. Elizabeth Hervey

LOUISA.

CHAPTER I.

"HEAVEN protect you, my dear child! God preſerve you! endeavour to recover your wonted ſerenity of mind; and remember at all times, and upon all occaſions, you may command my ſervices."

Such were the parting words of the good Doctor Sandolph, a tear gliſtening in his eye, as he preſſed Louiſa's hand, while he placed her in the carriage.

Louiſa (his beloved ward) unable to ſpeak, could only, with a dejected countenance, and ſtreaming eyes, wave her hand, before the poſtillion, by a briſk ſtroke of his whip, ſet his horſes in motion, and drove off full ſpeed. In vain Louiſa bent forward to catch another look at her venerable friend; a ſudden turn of the road diſappointed her intention, and ſhe ſunk back in the chaiſe oppreſſed with grief.

The chaiſe had ſcarcely got out of the town of Rocheſter, before her companion (a very loqua-

cious Abigail) exclaimed, "dear me, ma'am, I can't think why you ſhou'd take on ſo. I am ſure if as how I was a fine young lady like you, I wou'd not cry to leave narrow old parſon in the kingdom. Why, ma'am, you have no idear what a fine place Lonnon is; I am ſure none of your outlandiſh cities where you've lived can be compared to it. Folks here don't live upon frogs and ſoup meagre, but upon good joints of hot meat every day of their lives—and all the great folks roll in money; none of your poor gentry, all fine without, and rags within, like the French quality —No, no; my Lady Roſeville, your mama, is not one of thoſe gentry; why ſhe dreſſes as fine as a Princeſs, and many is the good thing ſhe has given me—ſo pray, dear Miſs, don't cry any more; I am ſure my lady will be monſtrous fond of you."

"I wiſh ſhe may, Mrs. Lacely," ſaid Louiſa, faintly, "and I ſhall endeavour to deſerve her affection."

"Deſerve indeed! why who ſhould ſhe love, if it be not her own fleſh and blood? Many a time hath ſhe been pining and fretting, becauſe as how you didn't live with her—I ſhall never forget her ladyſhip's joy, when ſhe heard of ſome folk's death! I ſhall now, ſaid ſhe"—

"Stop, Mrs. Lacely, I conjure you; this is a ſubject I cannot bear."

"Well,

" Well, ma'am, ſince as how it affects you, I will only ſay that her ladyſhip ſaid, (for, ma'am, ſhe is mighty affable, and free ſpoken to us ſervants) " now Lacely," ſays ſhe, " I ſhall get my daughter from the old parſon; it is high time," ſays ſhe, " I ſhou'd have my own way; I have been controuled long enough; and I can aſſure you, if the girl is as pretty as I am told, ſhe ſhall marry into one of the firſt families in the kingdom"—and ſo to be ſure you will, ma'am; no fear of your getting a huſband; for as my lady ſays, when a young lady is pretty, ſhe may pick and chooſe."

Mrs. Lacely, in the ſame ſtyle, continued to give Louiſa very comfortable aſſurances of her good fortune in matrimony, ſome anecdotes relative to Lady Roſeville, and ſtill more of herſelf—to all which Louiſa gave little or no anſwer.

Her thoughts were entirely engroſſed by her recent loſs, her ſeparation from her worthy friend, and her approaching interview with a mother whom ſhe had not ſeen ſince ſhe emerged from infancy. She was now at nineteen, going to ruſh into an unknown world, whoſe manners and cuſtoms ſhe knew only by report; and alas! ſhe had loſt the kind, the benevolent protectreſs of her youth. Now ſhe muſt ſubmit to the guidance of a perſon to whom ſhe was indeed connected by

the moſt ſacred tie, but whoſe character had not impreſſed her with thoſe ſentiments of filial reſpect and tenderneſs which ſhe had been accuſtomed to feel for a grand-mother, who was now no more! Grief and apprehenſion ſeemed to compreſs her heart as ſhe approached the metropolis; ſhe ſcarcely heard Mrs. Lacely, who pointed out to her Weſtminſter Abbey, giving at the ſame time a long detail of the wax figures; nor did ſhe pay much attention to the beauty of the bridge, or to thoſe other objects that forcibly ſtrike ſtrangers with an idea of the ſize and magnificence of London—but as ſhe rolled rapidly through the ſtreets, her head felt confuſed, and her ſpirits diſagreeably hurried: yet ſhe almoſt dreaded the termination of her journey.

At laſt the carriage ſtopped in Welbeck-ſtreet; her limbs trembled as ſhe alighted, and ſhe was uſhered by a ſervant into a drawing room;—ſhe had heard that Lady Roſeville had been handſome, and expected to find ſuch remains of beauty as could comport with fifty years of age; not perhaps dignified by a gravity of dreſs, ſuch as ſhe had often beheld in ſome elderly ladies at Paris; becauſe ſhe had been told that in England little diſtinction was obſerved between young and old; therefore making ſome allowance for the licenſe of faſhion, and ſtill more for the character of her

mother,

mother, ſhe was prepared to ſee a perſon gaily adorned: but what was her aſtoniſhment when the door opened, and a figure advanced ſo totally different from what ſhe could have imagined, that ſhe could ſcarcely ſuppoſe it had any pretenſions to a matronly character.

It was, however, Lady Roſeville: fair and blooming, with flowing ringlets down her back, her head unincumbered with hat or cap; dreſſed in a muſlin *chemiſe*; her ample waiſt encircled with a girdle, from which hung two glittering watch chains, and innumerable trinkets. If from the exceſſive youthfulneſs of her appearance, Louiſa would never have gueſſed this to have been her mother, ſhe had no great reaſon to ſuppoſe her ſuch, from her reception.

No change of countenance denoted the tender agitation of a parent! Inſtead of being ſtrained to a maternal boſom, glowing with delight, Lady Roſeville juſt touched her cheek with the coolneſs of a ſtranger. The appellation of, "my dear child!" ſeemed accidentally to eſcape her lips; but though ſaid without emotion, it was not thus heard—That addreſs recalled to Louiſa's gentle mind a thouſand ſoft and melancholy recollections; painfully contraſting her paſt and preſent ſituation, ſhe burſt into tears, which ſeemed rather to diſpleaſe, than ſoften Lady Roſeville, who, leaving

her to compoſe herſelf, tripped to the pier glaſs to ſee that her hair had not been ruffled, or her *rouge* rubbed off.—Satisfied with her own perſon, ſhe turned to obſerve with more attention that of her daughter, and expreſſed her admiration in terms not flattering to her delicacy.—Louiſa too ſenſibly felt her indifference.—A few tender enquiries, a look, or geſture, that had denoted the leaſt ſymptom of affection, would have gratified her far more than compliments, which regarded only her exterior.

She thought her mother ſeemed to exult in her arrival, rather as a matter of triumph over others, whoſe intentions ſhe had diſappointed, than as a matter of real pleaſure to herſelf.

"Come, come," ſaid ſhe, "I muſt have no crying, it will ſpoil your eyes;" and then ſhe added more gravely, "I ſhould be half affronted if I did not imagine that your ſpirits may be a little flurried, owing to your journey, change of ſcene, &c."

Louiſa endeavoured to aſſume compoſure. "I hope ſoon," continued Lady Roſeville, "to ſee you with a very different countenance, for I hate melancholy people, and you will have no cauſe to look grave here;—I live a very gay life; you will be perpetually engaged I can aſſure you, and ſee a prodigious deal of company; for I am not at all like Lady Locket, who keeps her girls ſhut up in a nurſery,

a nurſery, for fear they ſhou'd rival her: every body cries ſhame upon her; but I ſhall act very differently.—Well, now tell me, what pretty faſhions you have brought over? All the young ladies will be dying to ſee your clothes; indeed I long myſelf to ſee them; for better not appear at all, than not faſhionably dreſſed. Pray are my curls done right?"

"Indeed, Madam," anſwered Louiſa, "my mind was too deeply afflicted to think of faſhions, for ſome time before I left Paris; and my mourning prevents my having any thing worth being ſeen by your Ladyſhip."

"Ah! that abominable mourning! Don't talk of it; never name it; it has been the Lord knows how much out of my pocket!—Wou'd you believe it—I had juſt bought all my winter clothes! —Oh dear! I muſt ſhew you my *coquelicot* ſatin —No, I can't neither; it is at the mantua makers —Well, but as I was ſaying, I had juſt bought the ſweeteſt things! when I was ſtruck all of a heap by the diſmal news you ſent—"

"Diſmal indeed!" interrupted Louiſa.

"Oh! as for the event, it was what might naturally be expected; and I ſee nothing very grievous in it; for old women muſt die—but her dying juſt at that time was very provoking; and what made it more ſo was, that the mail arrived three days

before the birth day, conſequently the news got into the papers; ſo I could not wear my beautiful gown and petticoat; and it will be quite old faſhioned before I can, and get tarniſhed and good for nothing.—I ſuppoſe you wonder to ſee me not in mourning at preſent; but I ſhall put it on in the evening; there is no occaſion to wear an odious black gown, except when one is to be ſeen."

Louiſa, little pleaſed with this converſation, remained ſilent; but ſhe could not check a ſtarting tear.

Lady Roſeville had not obſerved it—"I ſhould," ſaid ſhe, "have come myſelf to have fetched you, but the weather being very ſevere, I thought it prudent to ſtay at home, and nurſe a little cold I have had ſometime, that I may be able to go to Lady Daſhaway's *Thé* to-morrow—but come, we muſt think of dreſſing—God bleſs me! if you have not been again in tears; pray dry them up, elſe you will not be fit to be ſeen."

"Seen, Madam! I hope I am to have the pleaſure of paſſing this firſt day of our meeting, alone with you; for indeed I am quite unfit for company."

"O dear! no; what ſhould we do moping by ourſelves? I am never alone, but when I can't help it; however I ſhall only have two or three of my

my moſt intimate friends to dinner, and one table in the evening; though ſome of the party, I am afraid, won't ſtay; people hate to remain quiet—I ſent to ſeveral of my acquaintance as ſoon as I had determined to ſtay at home; but it was ſo late, they were all engaged.—*Apropos*, pray what time did you dine abroad? for I dine very early, ſeldom later than half an hour after five."

"I dined in the convent before twelve, Madam; but elſewhere at half paſt two, or three."

"Good God! how horrid! Why, child, I never heard of ſuch hours in my life; you muſt miſtake ſure: but come, Bouclon is waiting to dreſs your hair; I appointed him, that you might not be a figure; (your maid, as I underſtood, being detained at Paris by buſineſs, that prevented her attending you immediately) ſo I made Bouclon begin with me. Has not he dreſſed me charmingly?"

Louiſa, who found ſhe ſhould offend her mother, if ſhe neglected the important affair of the toilette, ſet about it with as good a grace as ſhe could aſſume—Before it was over, Lady Roſeville ran into her apartment; "Lord child!" cried ſhe, "you are in high luck! Lady Bridget Wilford (who is engaged to dine here) has juſt ſent me a note to deſire my permiſſion to bring with her Lord Pompouſton, (her nephew) who is lately come

from Ireland—I charge you to ſet your cap at him, for he is worth having, I promiſe you; and is as handſome a man as ever was ſeen.—How charming it wou'd be to have you Lady Pompouſton! and if you play your cards well, I think it very poſſible."

Louiſa, little elated with this news, after quietly finiſhing her dreſs, followed her mother into the drawing room; and preſently after, a very preciſe looking-man made his appearance.

"Oh! is it you, Mr. Bangrove? I did not expect you to day," ſaid Lady Roſeville, with no very gracious aſpect. "Well, ſit you down; I believe there will be room for you at table."

Louiſa had ariſen at his entrance; but her mother told her in a whiſper, that it was unneceſſary to take any notice of him, as he was only a man of buſineſs.

To the next gueſt who arrived (Sir Ralph Random) Lady Roſeville was all ſmiles and civility, and preſented him to her daughter, as one of her beſt friends. He was a little mean figure; and ſeemed by the wonderful eaſe of his manner, to feel himſelf quite at home in Lady Roſeville's houſe.

But now a louder and more conſequential rap at the door, announced the arrival of the great perſonages, for whom dinner had waited above half an

an hour; and Lady Bridget Wilford, her niece, (Miſs Benſley) and Lord Pompouſton, appeared. After the uſual civilities were over, and that Lady Roſeville had preſented her daughter to this party, Louiſa had leiſure to obſerve them during the ſilence which uſually prevails in a mixed company, who think the laſt ten minutes which precede dinner, uncommonly ſlow and languid.

Their exterior would have diſappointed her, had ſhe expected much—but Lady Roſeville's converſation had not been ſuch as to prejudice her in favour of her judgment; nor had ſhe any very ſanguine hopes of finding in *her* choſen ſociety, characters that might engage her eſteem. Unwilling however to be too faſtidious, ſhe kept her mind unprejudiced, deſirous (if poſſible) of finding ſomething to approve, in thoſe diſtinguiſhed by her mother.

She could perceive that two of the party had great pretenſions; theſe were Lady Bridget Wilford, and Lord Pompouſton.—Lady Bridget was genteel in her perſon, and had the air of a woman of faſhion; ſhe was ſome years younger than Lady Roſeville; and though over dreſſed, the ſame things did not appear ſo *outrê* upon her, as when adopted by her friend, whoſe corpulent figure made them appear doubly ridiculous. It was evident, that Lady Roſeville took her in every reſpect for her

model; ſhe ſeemed to watch her very looks, and as nearly as poſſible to adjuſt her features to them.

Lady Bridget had the little vanity to be pleaſed with this; and aſſumed an air of ſuperiority, and even of protection, that diſguſted Louiſa.

Miſs Benſley was one of thoſe moving pictures which ſerve well enough to figure in a public place; large blue glaſſy eyes, an appearance of red and white, and a profuſion of ornaments, were all that could be remembered of her; and had ſhe ſuddenly diſappeared, other figures equally inſipid and inanimate might have ſlipped into her place, without the change being perceived.

But very different was Lord Pompouſton. With a figure particularly tall and well made, an elevation of head, a lofty gait, and an impoſing aſpect, he ſeemed formed to eclipſe, and reſolved to outſhine all competitors; his features were large, but not irregular; his eyes very dark, round, and prominent; likely to abaſh, but not to be abaſhed.—Though his dreſs was apparently ſimple, upon a cloſer examination, it was eaſy to perceive that it was ſtudied; and it was equally diſcernible that when he was polite, it was from exceſſive condeſcenſion; his natural ton, ſeemed a haughty inattention to others, while he arrogated as an indiſputable claim, their attention to himſelf.

The ladies being ſeated in a circle, the gentlemen,

men, according to the laudable cuſtom that prevails, proceeded to block up the fire with their backs.

Silence was irkſome to Lord Pompouſton; ſo with the flap of his coat in one hand, and a pinch of ſnuff in the other, gracefully elevated to ſhew its form, as well as an enormous ring that covered half his little finger, he glanced his eyes downwards, with a ſupercilious air on his companions, who ſcarcely reached his ſhoulder, while he condeſcended to enter into converſation with them.

Louiſa unfortunately was prevented from hearing the ſubject, by being obliged to give her attention to ſomething Lady Bridget Wilford was telling her; but a pauſe enſuing in her diſcourſe, ſhe heard his lordſhip declaim, in ſomewhat of a foreign accent, but with a naſal, yet ſo elevated a tone of voice as effectually to drown every other. His auditors in vain made ſome efforts to raiſe theirs, to the pitch of his, in hopes of being heard; the force of his lungs prevailed, and ſhe could diſtinguiſh a ſtrong aſſertion of his lordſhip's, who repeatedly cried, "I tell you, Sir, I know it to be ſo."

"Give me leave," cried Sir Ralph, "give me leave, my Lord, only juſt——"

"Why Lord God, Sir! I know what you are going

going to ſay; why will you pretend to diſpute the matter with me!—Have not I above a thouſand tenants in the county of———? and is there one of them that will not tell you the ſame?—By the way, I muſt inform you of a thing which perhaps will ſurprize you, at leaſt five hundred of my tenants are Pompouſtons, as well as myſelf."

"I crave pardon, my Lord," ſaid Bangrove, advancing ſlow and erect, one hand extended, "I humbly crave pardon, but I doubt your Lordſhip means a hundred, or perhaps fifty, inſtead of a thouſand."

"Sdeath! Sir! do you think I am a fool, and that I don't know what I am ſaying? A thouſand Sir! I ſaid a thouſand!" applying his mouth to Bangrove's ear, who, quickly retreating, clapped his hands to his ears, and raiſing his eyes to the ceiling exclaimed, "Good Lord! I have done! I ſay no more, but deeply commiſerate your ſituation, for what a plague you muſt have with ſo many tenants!"

"None in the leaſt, Sir—Perhaps I am the moſt calculated for buſineſs, of any man alive—My mind at once ſeizes the moſt complicated idea, and without any difficulty, the largeſt concerns are inveſtigated and arranged in a minute; but were application neceſſary, no perſon is more capable

pable of it than myſelf; for buſineſs is ſo eaſy to me, that I never tire"

"Wonderful!" cried Bangrove, "I ſhould not have ſuſpected," added he with an ironical ſmile, "from what I have heard of your Lordſhip's ſtyle of life, that ſerious affairs occupied, even a ſmall part of your attention; and, I muſt confeſs, though trained from my youth to buſineſs, I have never yet found it ſo very eaſy; nor am I poſſeſſed of the art of doing it without fatigue."

"Lord, Sir," cried Lord Pompouſton impatiently, "how can your plodding law buſineſs render you a competent judge of what a man of faſhion can, or cannot do; or what is eaſy, or not eaſy, to people of ſuperior talents?—How ſhould you have any idea of the concerns of a large property like mine?"

Bangrove coloured, and was preparing to reply, when dinner was announced.

CHAPTER II.

LORD Pompouſton, after handing down Lady Roſeville, placed himſelf next to her, and did the honours of the table, taking care to put into his looks every time he addreſſed Louiſa, an encouraging ſmile, leſt that young lady, who he ſuppoſed, had never ſeen ſo great a man as himſelf, ſhould be over-awed. His attentions to the company (except in carving for them, which he piqued himſelf on doing better than any body) were barely civil; however, till he had ſatisfied his appetite (which was exceſſive) their ears enjoyed ſome repoſe. The appearance of the deſert, ſeemed to him a ſignal to break it.

"Pray, Miſs Roſeville, ſaid he, in what part of France have you reſided?"

"At Paris, and in an adjacent village, chiefly, my Lord."

"At Paris! umph! well, and did you get into ſociety at all?"

"O yes; when I was of a proper age, I had the honour to be received into one that was highly diſtinguiſhed."

"Really! why I did not think *that* ſo very eaſy a matter—I fancy, my dear Madam, you miſtake my meaning. When I ſpeak of ſociety, I mean

I mean a certain ſet, into which ſcarcely any Engliſh are ever admitted. I will explain this matter to you; there are in that city a number of different ſocieties, compoſed of *gens de robe*, *gens de lettres*, *financiers*, and little *nobleſſe*, aye and even of great *nobleſſe*; but theſe, unleſs they are of the ton, and admitted into the Queen's parties, are people of no conſequence; none in the world, however great their rank and dignity; therefore nothing diverts me ſo much, as when I hear young Engliſhmen talking of their Paris acquaintance, and impoſing upon the ignorant here; whereas not one in a hundred has ever been admitted into any hotel, but that of the *Marechal Duc de Biron*, whoſe doors are open to all Engliſh.

"For my part I was very particularly circumſtanced at Paris; had the *entrée partout*, was always of the Queen's parties, at all her *petit ſoupers*, and conſtantly danced with her at the balls. My being thus diſtinguiſhed, I will not," added he with a ſmile of ſelf-complacency, "place entirely to the account of my perſonal merit, but to the powerful connections I have in France; however, I will be bound for it, no other ſtranger was ever received upon the footing I was. Figure to yourſelf, my dear Madam, that I was *l'enfant de la famille partout!*—Nothing could be done without

Milor

Milor Pompouſton; I was thought the life and ſoul of every party; and moſt of the Engliſh faſhions, which now prevail at Paris, were introduced by me.

"But pray explain, Miſs Roſeville, what ſort of a ſociety yours was?"

"A mixture of polite amiable people; capable of pleaſing and being pleaſed; none of them attempting to impoſe their opinions upon others, but willing to give, or receive information."

"Upon my word, my Lord, I muſt be ſo bold to ſay," cried Bangrove, "that I think the young lady has very happily deſcribed thoſe people who conſtituted what you call her ſociety."

"No doubt, Sir," ſaid Lord Pompouſton, with a look he meant to be petrifying "that *you* are an admirable judge!"—But, with your profound knowledge of the law, I wonder it does not ſtrike you, that Miſs Roſeville has evaded, rather than anſwered, my queſtion. *That* regarded the rank and ſituation in life, of thoſe with whom ſhe mixed; in ſhort, whether they were of the ton, and not what were their knowledge, talents, or character. Do you affirm, Miſs Roſeville, that they were of the ton?"

"Certainly, not my Lord; ſome of them were Engliſh, ſome were foreigners, men of letters, and ſome were French ladies and gentlemen of exceeding

ceeding good families, and of conſiderable fortune; diſtinguiſhed for their elegant manners and hoſpitality to ſtrangers; but not conſidered by the frivolous as of the ton."

"Oh! mighty good ſort of people, I dare ſay," ſaid lord Pompouſton with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, as he gently opened the lid of his ſnuff box; "proſing people," continued he; "formal and mighty decorous: I know exactly *la tournure* of your ſociety;" and then with much dignity he applied a pinch of ſnuff to his noſe, which curved up rather more at that moment than nature had intended.

To avoid noticing his Lordſhip's arrogance, which offended Louiſa, ſhe addreſſed ſomething to her neighbour, Miſs Benſley; who looked fixedly in her face all the while ſhe was ſpeaking, as if very attentive, but when ſhe pauſed, waiting for an anſwer, Miſs Benſley only ſaid, "I beg your pardon, I don't know what you have been ſaying; for I have been thinking how much I ſhould like to have a pair of ſtays made after the pattern of yours—I never ſaw ſuch a waiſt in my life! Why, ſurely, you muſt ſtarve yourſelf to keep of that ſize; indeed I obſerved you ate ſcarcely any thing, and I ſuppoſe you did this on account of your ſhape."

"Indeed," returned Louiſa laughing, "I am not

not ſo very prudent; it would give me no ſort of concern if I were to grow a little fat, provided I did not become unwieldy."

"Why, ſure you are not ſerious? Nothing is ſo ſhocking as to be fat! Do you know I am at this moment hungry, for I do not dare indulge; and I walk ſometimes till I am ready to drop, elſe I ſhould grow a horrid figure.—But pray remember the ſtays."

"I never wear any;" anſwered Louiſa, "this is nothing but a *corſet*."

"Well, you amaze me! But I ſee your motive; you are afeared I ſhould look as ſmall as you; I ſhould act juſt as you do, was I in your place."

"Is it poſſible, Miſs Benſley, that you can ſuppoſe me, or believe yourſelf capable of having ſo ridiculous an apprehenſion? When my baggage is come and unpacked, if you like the pattern of any of my clothes, you will be extremely welcome to it."

This ſpeech won Miſs Benſley's heart, and ſhe poured forth a profuſion of acknowledgements, and unrequired profeſſions of friendſhip.

As ſoon as the ladies were aſſembled in the drawing room, Lady Bridget made a ſign to Louiſa, to take a ſeat near her; ſhe propoſed to herſelf to examine what advantages ſhe had derived from her long reſidence on the continent.

"As

"As you have," ſaid ſhe, "Miſs Roſeville, been educated in France, I preſume you are come back highly accompliſhed, and poſſeſs a thouſand talents. Without doubt, you are muſical; pray, what is your favourite inſtrument, for I ſuppoſe you play upon ſeveral?"

"I can only play upon the harpſichord, Madam; but I know enough of muſick to accompany other inſtruments tolerably."

"Humph! I expected to hear you were a great proficient in muſick, particularly on the harp, ſo much the faſhion at Paris; but I ſuppoſe your genius rather pointed to drawing, or painting."

"I have a little knowledge of drawing, Madam; I learnt perſpective to enable me to take views; but I know nothing of painting."

"Can you embroider? What curious works can you perform?"

"None, Madam!"

"Very ſtrange indeed! you ſeem to have had a wretched education. How differently have I brought up my niece! ſhe is, I can aſſure you, one of the moſt accompliſhed girls in London. Pray were you ever taught to dance?"

"Certainly," anſwered Louiſa, colouring; "but indeed, Madam, an account of my education would be ſo very unintereſting to you, that I hope you will diſpenſe with it—My grandmother was as intel-

intelligent, as good and kind; therefore, whatever imperfections I may have, certainly ought not to be imputed to her, who, I am perſuaded, neglected nothing that ſhe thought would tend to my advantage."

"Yet I do not find ſhe gave you many maſters."

"Becauſe it was her opinion that too much time is ſpent in the preſent age, in the attainment of accompliſhments, which ſhe rather wiſhed me to conſider as the relaxation of leiſure hours, than as the ſole buſineſs of my life."

"Be ſo good then," ſaid Lady Bridget, with a contemptuous ſmile, "to inform me what ſhe thought worth your attention?"

"Every thing that could meliorate my diſpoſition, or enlarge my mind."

"Oh! ſo I perceive your grandmother intended to have made you a learned woman."

"I rather believe ſhe wiſhed to have made me a good one; *that* ſeemed the end to which all her maternal care was directed:—but alas! ſhe was taken from me before I had acquired ſufficient wiſdom to profit by her leſſons!"—And a tear ſtarted in her eye as ſhe aroſe to ſtep acroſs the room, tired with the impertinent examination ſhe had undergone.

"Your daughter is much too grave, Lady Roſeville;"

Roſeville;" ſaid Lady Bridget, turning towards her; "ſhe is handſome, but ſhe has none of that bewitching vivacity which is ſuppoſed to be the characteriſtic of the French. I expected ſhe would have caught their air, and that we ſhould have ſeen her gay, wild, and airy; you muſt remedy the defects of her education; and for God's ſake take care the men don't ſuſpect her of being learned, for they will be afraid of her. The young men of the preſent age never marry a woman who is better informed than perhaps they are themſelves."

"I crave pardon, my Lady," cried Bangrove, who had advanced to attend to this converſation, "but if that be their opinion, many faſhionable gentlemen ſtand a chance of never getting wives; for the young women learn too much, and the young men too little, at preſent."

Lady Bridget deigned not to notice that Bangrove meant to join in the converſation; ſhe continued to lecture her friend on the defects ſhe had perceived in her daughter; and Lady Roſeville, who had long either thought, or feigned to think, her opinion an oracle that ſhe muſt implicitly obey, requeſted her advice how ſhe ought to act. —Lady Bridget, pleaſed at the deference paid to her judgment, enlarged upon the method ſhe herſelf had purſued in the education of her niece; and as Miſs Roſeville's mind, at preſent ſeemed depreſſed

depreſſed by affliction, ſhe recommended, as the firſt ſtep neceſſary, to hurry her at once into the world; where it would be ſtrange at her age, if ſhe did not ſoon acquire ſome portion of that gay volatility, which was thought ſo becoming.

Lady Roſeville's attention was now called off to ſome freſh company that arrived—A party was formed for cards; while it was arranging, Lord Pompouſton ſaid, he was vaſtly mortified he could take no part in it, as he had a million of engagements for that evening; "but," added he with a ſmile, "I ſhall often call here, and lounge away an odd half hour," looking ſignificantly at Louiſa, who retained her wonted compoſure not much elated by this promiſe, which ſeemed however to delight her mother. His Lordſhip then departed; and Bangrove (who had been noticed by none but Louiſa, whoſe gentle nature could not bear to ſee any perſon cauſeleſsly depreſſed) ſlipped away.

Louiſa, ignorant of cribbage, could be of no uſe; but ſhe was commanded to ſit by, that ſhe might learn the game as ſoon as poſſible: however amuſing cards may be to thoſe who are engaged in playing them, they can intereſt a ſpectator but little; therefore it is not to be wondered at, that poor Louiſa, whoſe mind was ill at eaſe, thought this a moſt dull and unpleaſant evening.

Several times ſhe was on the point of dropping aſleep,

aſleep, and it was with great ſatisfaction that ſhe ſaw the company diſperſe, and received Lady Roſeville's permiſſion to retire to her apartment.

There, ſhe threw herſelf into a chair before the fire, and gave way to a variety of painful reflections, whence ſhe was rouſed by Mrs. Lacely, who, 'till her own maid arrived, officiated in her room.—"Well, Ma'am," ſaid ſhe, advancing briſkly, "an't my Lord a charming fine man? as portly a gentleman as ever I ſaw, and a huge eſtate he has; and ſo ſhould all great noblemen have; for what ſignifies a Lord, if he has not money?—I ſhould not value him of a ruſh; a title will neither find meat nor drink—Well I ſay nothing, but I know what, and ſo does my Lady too —If I was in ſome folk's place, I wou'd n't let him ſlip thro' my fingers."

Louiſa, ill diſpoſed to reliſh Mrs. Lacely's tattle, and deſirous of ſolitude, made no anſwer to this ſpeech, and civilly declining her attendance, wiſhed her a good night.

But not ſo eaſily was Mrs. Lacely to be diſmiſſed; accuſtomed to Lady Roſeville's loquacity, and to be herſelf indulged in her's, ſhe would not take the hint.

"Don't you think Miſs Benſley very pretty, Ma'am? and a moſt affable young lady ſhe is. Why, ſhe will come into my room, and talk to

me for hours; and when ſhe is finely dreſſed, as ſhe lives but in the next ſtreet, ſhe ſends for me to ſee her. I dare ſay ſhe wou'd like to marry Lord Pompouſton herſelf; but Lady Bridget ſays, he muſt have fortune as well as beauty; and to be ſure 'tis fit he ſhou'd—And Lady Bridget, tho' one of the quality, is not rich; yet ſhe makes a great figure. The Lord knows how ſhe contrives it, but I have heard her ſervants ſay, ſhabby doings at home; her Ladyſhip dines upon a mutton chop; but ſhe wears out a ſight of clothes, ſo that her maid has a good place, though ſhe has but ſmall wages"

"Upon my word, Mrs. Lacely," cried Louiſa impatiently, "I muſt beg you to leave me; I am incapable of attending to you."

Mrs. Lacely not very well pleaſed, at laſt relieved her from her company, and ſhe haſtened to ſeek repoſe.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning ſhe awoke refreſhed by that ſweep ſleep which attends the innocent, even at times when the mind is far from happy. Lady Roſeville was aſtoniſhed, at her blooming appearance, when ſhe ſent for her to breakfaſt.

"Why ſurely," cried ſhe, "if that colour is not natural, and I never ſaw one like it, you have at leaſt learnt in France to *rouge* moſt delightfully."

"I never wore any *rouge* in my life, Madam, but once, at a ball."

"Really! well, God grant you may keep that bloom. Indeed I have the moſt ſanguine expectations of the brilliant fortune you will make; but, as Lady Bridget obſerves, you muſt lay aſide that ſerious air, for it will not take, I promiſe you."

"I will always endeavour to be chearful, Madam; indeed I conſider it as a duty; for a repining ſpirit, muſt be unpleaſing in the ſight of God; yet, when the mind has received a deep affliction, it cannot eaſily recover it's natural tone."

"Yes, yes; it may; you muſt racket about,

and think of nothing but amuſement.—To-day we dine with Lady Bridget, and go with her to Lady Daſhaway's *Thē*; and now, if you pleaſe, (as ſoon as we have breakfaſted) we will call upon Lady Bridget, and go and ſee my new houſe, for I long to get out of this dog-hole."

"Dear Madam! I thought this houſe remarkably neat, and pretty."

"Aye, but it is much too ſmall; when I give an aſſembly, I am forced to have my bed taken down; and it is impoſſible to cram the Faro table into this room: beſides too, now that you are come to me, I require a larger habitation, and in a better ſtyle; I can aſſure you I mean to give very ſmart balls and ſuppers—Mr. Taſtey, the upholſterer, is fitting up my houſe in Portman-ſquare, in a moſt elegant manner, as you will ſee, and I hope to get into it in about a fortnight."

Soon after the ladies proceeded to Wimpole-ſtreet; and having taken up Lady Bridget, and Lord Pompouſton, who deſired to attend them, repaired to Portman-ſquare.

Louiſa was indeed aſtoniſhed, not only at the elegance, but at the ſize of this houſe; and ſomewhat puzzled to imagine how her mother could afford it. She knew ſhe had only a jointure of eight hundred pounds per annum, and was to receive

ceive four hundred, for her maintenance. This houſe ſeemed to her capable of containing a family on the higheſt ſcale, and with a ſuitable eſtabliſhment. While her mother (aſſiſted by Lady Bridget) was giving directions to Mr. Taſtey, Lord Pompouſton, as uſual, ſtrutted about, endeavouring to rectify the opinions of others, and to impoſe *his* upon them, as ſentences from which there could be no appeal.

In the courſe of the ſurvey, he informed Louiſa that he had ſeen, every fine houſe on the continent. "I have paſſed," ſaid he, "above half my life in France, ſome years in Italy, and ſome in Germany; I have viſited all the northern courts, was particularly noticed by the Empreſs of Ruſſia," drawing out the chitterling of his ſhirt, and looking down at his legs with a ſlight ſmile of complacency. "Faith ſhe was a fine woman! and——"

He was proceeding, when Louiſa, unable to ſuppreſs her diſguſt, turned ſhort, and left him, tho' he attempted to detain her.

The dinner at Lady Bridget's was ſuch, that day, as to juſtify Mrs. Lacely's aſſertion; the diſhes were all decorated with fine names, but were in fact uneatable. Lord Pompouſton, after trying ſeveral, exclaimed, "Lord, Madam, what a

d——d cook you have got! do pray ſend for Bechamel, the next time you give a dinner."

Lady Bridget's eyes now flaſhed fire; "my cook is good enough for me; and ſince I find you are ſo very nice, I will not another time preſume to requeſt the honour of your Lordſhip's company."

His wary Lordſhip, who wiſhed nothing leſs than to affront his aunt at that time, ſoon rectified matters, by artfully adminiſtering ſome doſes of a drug, which, haughty as he was, he deigned occaſionally to diſpenſe, when his intereſt, or his convenience were concerned; and it operated as he expected.

Louiſa obſerved, that both Lady Bridget, and Miſs Benſley, had long been accuſtomed to conſider Lord Pompouſton, who was the head of their family, not only as a perſon of the firſt conſequence, but likewiſe, as a being of a ſuperior nature; — they quoted his opinion upon all occaſions; and they made him the ſtandard by which they judged other men; it ſeemed too to be the faſhion in that family, to puff each other: Lady Bridget rarely mentioned her niece without tacking an encomium to her ſpeech; but Lord Pompouſton, though willing to receive the tribute he thought his due, was ſeldom diſpoſed to return it, particularly to his couſin, whom he regarded as an inſignificant, ſpoiled child, and treated in a moſt ſupercilious manner.

The

The freedom of Lord Pompouſton's behaviour, and his repeated attempts to force Louiſa to converſe with him, determined her to confine almoſt her whole attention to Miſs Benſley; but it was an ungrateful taſk; that young lady's capacity was of the loweſt order; and ſhe could only talk on ſubjects, which Louiſa had been little in the habit of diſcuſſing; beſides too, as ſhe was going that evening to a very gay houſe, where ſhe told Louiſa half the town was to aſſemble, her thoughts were ſo entirely engroſſed with this image, that ſhe was particularly abſent.

As the invitation to the *Thé*, was for eight o'clock, the party agreed to be there a little after nine, that they might not be unfaſhionably early. They found moſt of the company already aſſembled, divided into parties, and ſeated round ſmall tables, with all the apparatus rather for a meal, than for a refreſhment.

Louiſa was confuſed at obſerving that ſhe excited general attention: a momentary pauſe took place, as it were by common conſent in converſation; a ceſſation of depredations on the cakes and muffins enſued; ſome cups were ſuſpended from the lips; and at laſt a buz of admiration broke forth, and was quickly echoed through the room. Her mourning added to the brilliancy of her complexion, and ſet off the elegance of her figure to

advantage: but what gave the chief luſtre to her beauty, was her unaffected deportment.

Lady Daſhaway received her very graciouſly, and took much pains herſelf to find places for this party.

As ſoon as the repaſt was concluded, the muſic ſtruck up for a dance. This was quite unexpected to Louiſa, and though her ſpirits were ſtill too much dejected to reliſh this amuſement, yet, as ſhe had ceaſed to wear black gloves, ſhe could not well decline taking a part in it; and at that moment Mr. Selwyn, a gentleman ſhe had known at Paris, accoſting her, ſhe readily conſented to accept him for a partner.

While he flew acroſs the room to get gloves, Lord Pompouſton, who had judged it unneceſſary to engage her before-hand, approached, and with an eaſy air attempted to feize her hand, "Come along," cried he, "they are juſt going to begin."

"I am waiting for my partner," anſwered Louiſa gravely, withdrawing her hand.

"What do you mean, Miſs Roſeville?" aſked he angrily; "Surely you can't have engaged yourſelf already?"

"Indeed but I have, my Lord."

"Why, who in the name of God, can you, a ſtranger, know here?"

"Mr. Selwyn."

Lord

Lord Pompouſton inwardly muttered ſomething about puppy, but ſeeing her partner prepare to lead her off, he ſtopped her to ſay, that ſince ſhe had diſpoſed of her hand ſo precipitately, it behoved him to loſe no time in engaging it for the two ſucceeding dances.

Louiſa in reply, coldly ſaid, ſhe fancied ſhe ſhould ſcarcely be diſpoſed to dance any more.

"I am not much accuſtomed, Madam," ſaid he, frowning, as he followed her along the room, "to ſolicit, and ſtill leſs to ſolicit in vain—however I ſhall preſently enquire your determination."

He then placed himſelf cloſe to the dancers, that he might watch Louiſa without interruption.

She danced with inimitable grace:—Lord Pompouſton, enraptured, forgot his diſappointment, and exclaimed aloud, as ſhe went down the dance, that, "ſhe was the fineſt creature in the world:" Then addreſſing thoſe near him, aſked, "if any woman, brought up in England, could pretend to dance in that ſtyle?"——"Mark her motions," cried he, "how light! how graceful!"

Louiſa's delicacy, exceſſively hurt at the freedom of his remarks, accompanied by the groſſeſt adulation, glanced at him a haughty indignant look, which he pretended not to ſee; and advancing the moment he ſaw her at leiſure, requeſted the honour of being her partner.

But Louiſa, leſs than ever diſpoſed to oblige him, coldly ſaid, ſhe ſhould dance no more.

" Not dance any more!" cried he, " it were a ſin you ſhould ſit ſtill; for who can delight the eyes of all beholders, like yourſelf?"

" Many ladies here have a much better claim to admiration than I can poſſibly pretend to," ſaid Louiſa, modeſtly," but few I ſhould think would be pleaſed with extravagant compliments, which I beg you will be perſuaded are diſguſtful to me."

" No, no;" cried he, " 'tis impoſſible that the involuntary expreſſions of admiration drawn from me, upon ſeeing how much you excel all others, can be diſagreeable to you, for I did you no more than juſtice; and once more I entreat you will let me have the happineſs of your hand,"

" I have already told your Lordſhip, that it is my intention to decline dancing again."

" Have you reflected," aſked he, " that you will make yourſelf very particular, by refuſing to join the dancers?"

" Surely," cried Louiſa, warmly, " I am at liberty to act as I chuſe—I do not in the leaſt wiſh to detain your Lordſhip, and would recommend to you to ſeek yourſelf a partner."

" No; ſince you will not indulge me, I won't dance, but ſit here with you; and faith I believe you are right; dancing at beſt is but a bore: only the

women hate one ſo, if one does not dance, that ſometimes, *malgrē moi*, I do it—At preſent, indeed, it became my ardent deſire, becauſe I ſhould have gloried in my partner."

"But why ſhould you, Lord Pompouſton, partake of my ſingularity?"

"Ha; ha; I ſhall not be ſingular at leaſt in admiring you."

Louiſa now found ſhe had judged wrong; for ſhe was far more expoſed to Lord Pompouſton's converſation by ſitting ſtill, than ſhe would have been by dancing with him. At that moment Lady Daſhaway approached with a pretty young woman, whom ſhe deſired his Lordſhip to dance with.

"Upon my ſoul, Madam," cried he, "I cannot move; unfortunately I ſtrained my ancle this morning; Miſs Roſeville knows I have been lamenting that I could not dance with her."

Louiſa longed to contradict him, but before ſhe could ſpeak, Lady Daſhaway ſaid haſtily,

"Oh! that excuſe won't paſs—You have been ſo long in Ireland, that you are ignorant I ſuppoſe that it is no longer the faſhion for young men to pretend they can't dance—I have not heard of one ſprained ancle, ſince the Prince ſet dancing a-going. So come along, I deſire."

"Impoſſible, utterly impoſſible: oh God! what

a twinge was that!" clapping his hand on his leg, and making a very wry face;

And a young man juſt then approached them, who, wanting a partner, led off the young lady.

Both Lady Bridget Wilford, and Lady Roſeville, were engaged at the faro table, and Miſs Benſley in the dancing.

Louiſa, unacquainted with the reſt of the company, had not courage to mix with thoſe who were unconcerned in the dance; therefore, diſagreeable as was Lord Pompouſton's converſation, ſhe had no remedy but to ſubmit to it; but her laconic anſwers, and averted looks, ſufficiently denoted with what repugnance.—At length, ſeeing Miſs Benſley diſengaged, ſhe haſtily aroſe to join her; and two vacant places appearing in a corner of an outward room, they ſat down together. Miſs Benſley's partner followed them, and ſtood leaning againſt the wall, amuſing himſelf with fanning her, and rattling away in a very extraordinary manner; while ſhe, ſo far from being abſent, as Louiſa had often found her, liſtened with great attention; and though ſhe did not indeed ſay much, in reply to this nonſenſe, ſhe ſimpered occaſionally, and exclaimed "La! Sir John—Dear me! How can you ſay ſo!—

Louiſa not conceiving theſe unmeaning words as denoting the leaſt diſapprobation of language, that

to

to her ſeemed extremely offenſive, ſtarted up, and taking her under the arm, led her away.

"What's the matter? what have you got to ſay?" aſked Miſs Benſley, not well pleaſed at this removal.

"To ſay!" anſwered Louiſa, "how can you allow that man to inſult you thus?"

"Inſult me! La! I am ſure Sir John did not mean any ſuch thing—You have no notion how good humoured he is; and he is reckoned vaſtly clever, and agreeable, I aſſure you."

"But I hope you do not think him ſo. For my part, tho' I do not pretend to underſtand *much* of what he ſaid; had any thing very clever eſcaped him, probably I ſhould have heard it. Some of his unprincipled ſentiments did reach my ear, and I wonder his daring avowal of them does not exclude him from poliſhed ſociety."

"La;" cried Miſs Benſley, "there's nobody more the ton."

"So much the worſe," returned Louiſa; "but," continued ſhe, "people of delicacy will never ſcruple to ſhew a proper reſentment when they are treated with diſreſpect; but to ſit quiet and ſmile muſt certainly be conſidered as a tacit encouragement of language, that I am ſure my dear Miſs Benſley cannot approve."

"Dear me! you are ſo ſtrict! Why half the men

men talk in the ſame ſtyle; and people would on ly be thought prudes, if they were to be offended at it."

"Better they ſhould be thought prudes, than incur a ſtill worſe ſuſpicion."

Nothing worth mentioning occurred the reſt of the evening; Lord Pompouſton's affiduities had ſo completely chagrined Louiſa, that ſhe could take but little part in the general feſtivity. She had not yet met with a ſingle creature capable of intereſting her; naturally warm and tender, ſhe felt an aching void in her heart, which ſhe deſpaired to fill up.

By the delay in the arrival of her baggage, ſhe was deprived too of her uſual reſource in books; ſhe had not yet ſeen any in her mother's houſe; upon enquiring of her whether ſhe could lend her any, "certainly," ſaid ſhe, I love reading my ſelf, and read the whole time my hair is dreſſing; I ſubſcribe conſtantly to———— you will find ſome of his books in that cloſet, with a few of my own. Go and chooſe for yourſelf."

Louiſa perceived that moſt of the books in this collection, had been very much read; indeed ſo much ſo, that ſhe cared not to touch them; however, taking down ſome of the cleaneſt, ſhe found they were all novels..

This was a ſpecies of reading unknown to her,

as her grandmother had entirely diſcouraged it: but the want of books, and a page or two ſhe had run over, in one of them, exciting her curioſity, tempted her to take it—when checking herſelf ſuddenly, "Why ſhould I," thought ſhe, "do *now*, what I would not have done ſome months ſince? Am I, becauſe I am unfortunately deprived of my beloved grandmother, to neglect her injunctions? Have I not the ſtrongeſt reaſon to think ſhe never gave any that had not my welfare in view? If then ſhe thought books of this kind frivolous, and even often pernicious to youth, recommending to me to defer peruſing them, till age had matured my underſtanding, ſurely I ought to ſubmit to her opinion.

Yes, beloved ſhade," continued ſhe, a tear ſtealing down her cheek, "Yes, I will, throughout life, regulate my actions by your better judgment. Yes, I will do as *Madame de Lambert* ſays, Seneca adviſed his friend.

"*Choiſiſſez parmi les grands hommes celui qui vous paroîtra le plus reſpectable: ne faites rien qu'en ſa preſence: rendez-lui compte de toutes vos actions.*"

"Your ideal preſence ſhall check me, if ever I be tempted to ſwerve from your precepts; and when I am doing right, to the approbation of my own conſcience, I ſhall add the ſatisfaction you would have felt."

Then

Then perceiving an odd volume or two of Shakeſpeare, though ſhe had repeatedly read, and admired his works, ſhe took them, that ſhe might not leave the cloſet empty-handed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE evening after the *Thé*, was deſtined for the opera; Lady Bridget Wilford had a box, and having a place to ſpare, offered it to Louiſa. Lady Roſeville proteſted ſhe would not mob (as ſhe called it) in the pit, but ſhould diſpoſe of herſelf another way.

One circumſtance alone embittered Louiſa's ſatisfaction, in preparing for this entertainment, which was the apprehenſion of Lord Pompouſton's company.

But, whether he was offended at the ſlights ſhe had ſhewn him the preceding night, or whether he thought it right not to make himſelf too cheap, he did not approach the box till the opera was over, though Louiſa could often hear his voice, and ſee him ſtalk about, during the repreſentation. The pleaſure this gave her is ſcarcely to be expreſſed.

Paſſionately fond of muſic; perfectly verſed in it; and poſſeſſing an admirable ear, ſhe was all attention: nor did ſhe regret the magnificence of the Paris *ſpectacle*, when one of her ſenſes received ſuch ample compenſation, for what the other loſt. The Engliſh opera-houſe too appeared to her a pleaſing ſight; the brilliant ſhew

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in the boxes, inferior to none; though the ſize and decorations of the ſtage at the Paris opera, ſurpaſſed (as ſhe thought) all others.

Nothing had hitherto diſturbed Louiſa; Lady Bridget happened not to be in a talkative mood, and her niece's attention had been engaged by ſome gentleman behind; when at the concluſion of the dance, Lord Pompouſton arrived, and careleſsly offered to attend the ladies to their carriage, diſſuading them from going into the tea room, which he ſaid, was as bad as the hole of Calcutta.

Miſs Benſley now ſhewed a degree of animation in her countenance, of which Louiſa had not ſuſpected it capable.

"Oh la!" cried ſhe, "What can you mean, couſin? Who ever comes here, without going into the tea-room? I am ſure I wou'd'nt ſit cramped here for all the muſic in the world, if it was not for the ſake of going into the room afterwards. Pray, Ma'am, don't mind Lord Pompouſton."

"Indeed but I ſhall," ſaid Lady Bridget; "I got a great cold in that crowd laſt Saturday, and I'll go into it no more.

"Poor thing!" ſaid Lord Pompouſton, "ſhe never wiſhes for any thing but a little flirtation. Is not it for that, you are ſo eager to go into the room? Ha, Fanny!—don't I gueſs right?

Miſs Benſley angrily muttered ſome reply; but he,

he, without noticing her further, turned his whole attention upon Louiſa, who was ever under the neceſſity of repreſſing his forward behaviour, by a coldneſs, little ſhort of incivility.

It was Lady Bridget's cuſtom, to have her carriage placed at ſome diſtance from the theatre, and to convey herſelf and niece to it in hackney chairs. Theſe were accordingly procured, and Lord Pompouſton having ſeen the ladies ſafe from the door, returned into the houſe.

Louiſa ſoon perceived, that her chairmen were far from ſober; ſhe had ordered them to keep cloſe behind Lady Bridget's chair; (that of Miſs Benſley, her aunt choſe to place in the van) but neglecting this injunction, they let ſeveral others paſs between, and then trotting off very faſt to regain their ſtation, got into the midſt of a violent buſtle, occaſioned by two coachmen contending for place, each furiouſly laſhing his horſes, againſt thoſe of his antagoniſt. The cries that terror drew from Louiſa, were either not heard, or diſregarded.

The chairman proceeded; the chair was joſtled to and fro by the crowd; a confuſed noiſe of oaths and horrid ſcreams pierced Louiſa's ears; but nought deterred theſe drunken fellows from the vain attempt of breaking their way through the crowd, till one of the enraged coachmen, by a ſudden

a ſudden application of his whip, forced his horſes on the pavement, and ran the pole of his carriage againſt the chair.

It was ſupported by too unſteady hands to reſiſt this attack; it was inſtantly overſet, as well as the fore-chairman; and the near approach of the horſes, had ſcared away the ſurrounding mob.

Nothing could have ſaved Louiſa from deſtruction, but the gallant interpoſition of a gentleman, who ruſhing forwards, at the riſk of his life, ſeized the horſes, and fortunately ſtopping them, prevented the wheels from paſſing over the chair.

Louiſa had for ſome moments been unconſcious of her danger; pale and ſenſeleſs, ſhe was lifted out of the fallen vehicle, and when ſhe recovered, which was not for a conſiderable time, ſhe found herſelf in a room, ſurrounded by ſtrangers, all occupied in adminiſtering to her relief.

How ſhe came there ſhe knew not, nor could ſhe immediately recollect why; but having drank ſome hartſhorn and water, her ſcattered ſenſes returned; and all the circumſtances of her late perilous ſituation ruſhing into her mind, ſhe raiſed her fine eyes to Heaven, mentally acknowledging her deliverance.

To know who had been the inſtrument of this, was her next ſolicitude; but ſhe could not long be

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in doubt, when, on caſting her eyes around, ſhe perceived, amidſt footmen, chairmen, and vulgar-looking women, a gentleman, who ſeemed as if he had been ſupporting her with his arm, and had a bottle of ſalts in his hand.

His countenance ſtrongly indicated the anxiety he felt for her; and on finding her revived, he eagerly enquired how ſhe found herſelf.

Her voice was ſtill low and tremulous, but ſhe aſſured him, ſhe was tolerably well. "Good God!" added ſhe, "is it poſſible that I have eſcaped! Who ſaved me from deſtruction?"

The gentleman modeſtly ſaid, that it had been his good fortune to ſtop the horſes.

"Before I thank you as I ought, let me enquire," cried Louiſa, haſtily, "whether your humanity to me, has not endangered you? God forbid you ſhould have been hurt!"

The ſtranger aſſured her he had not; and begged ſhe would not mention thanks, ſince he had done no more than any other man would be happy to do, who had ſeen a Lady in ſuch a ſituation.

"Yet," cried Louiſa, faintly ſmiling, "there were many men preſent, who ſaw my danger as well as yourſelf.—Ah, Sir! I never can ſay how much I am indebted to you!"

Then recollecting the impropriety of her preſent

ſituation,

ſituation, in the bar of an ale-houſe, ſhe timidly hinted a wiſh, that ſome conveyance ſhould immediately be procured to carry her home.

"My carriage," ſaid the gentleman," is at the door, and I hope you will allow me the honour of ſeeing you ſafe home myſelf."

Louiſa heſitated; but the noiſe ſhe heard in the ſtreet, convinced her it was ſtill very full, and apprehending freſh danger in traverſing the crowd, ſhe had not courage to go alone; and the civil gentle deportment of the ſtranger, induced her to avail herſelf of his protection. She was riſing to depart, but he ſtopped her;—"You ſhall not, ſaid he, "be detained a moment here, only till the ſurgeon arrives, whom I have ſent for to examine your hand. I believe, Madam," continued he, (ſeeing, ſhe now for the firſt time obſerved it had been cut, and that much blood was upon her clothes) "your terror prevented your being ſenſible of the wound; perhaps too, the ſurgeon may recommend bleeding."

"Oh! no Sir," returned Louiſa, "that's quite unneceſſary, nor does the cut ſeem of any conſequence: but I am impatient to get home; my friends all this time muſt be ſuffering uneaſineſs, which my preſence will remove."

"Undoubtedly!" cried he; and having convinced himſelf that her hand was not materially

hurt,

hurt, he led her to his carriage. The anxiety he had ſhewn about her hand, wrapping a handkerchief round it himſelf; his caution to prevent her catching cold, and his reſpectful behaviour, charmed Louiſa. She told him where ſhe lived, thinking it in vain to ſeek Lady Bridget; for more than an hour had elapſed ſince they parted, it was improbable that ſhe ſhould have waited ſo long at the place appointed: therefore ſhe judged it beſt to go to Welbeck-ſtreet, where ſhe hoped to find her, and to account for her delay.

During the way, the ſtranger informed her of all thoſe particulars of which her terror had kept her ignorant; and that he had learned the name of the gentlemen whom the two coachmen ſerved, in order to have them puniſhed, for which purpoſe he meant to wait upon their maſters the day following.

Gentle and merciful, as was Louiſa's nature, ſhe thought ſuch conduct deſerved reprehenſion, though fortunately it had not been attended with fatal conſequences to herſelf, or the chairman, who received little or no hurt.

Her deliverer repeatedly enquired how ſhe found herſelf, bleſſed his good genius that had prompted him that night to walk from the opera-houſe to his carriage, and aſſured her, with no ſmall energy, that as long as he lived, he ſhould never forget his

emotion

emotion at the ſight of her, pale and ſenſeleſs, ſunk at the bottom of the chair.

" And do you think, Sir," ſaid ſhe, " I ſhall ever forget the obligations I owe you? Indeed, if you knew me, you would be certain, that they are engraven on my heart."

The gentleman made no reply; ſnatched her hand as if he meant to have kiſſed it; but checking himſelf, " Ah! Madam, forgive my preſumption; I had nearly repaid myſelf!" ſaid he, reſpectfully letting it go.

But Louiſa, in the warm effuſion of her heart, gracefully returned it, and the ſtranger eagerly preſſed it to his lips.

Silence now enſued. But the ſtranger, perceiving Louiſa ſomewhat confuſed at the warmth of his action, endeavoured to converſe with as much eaſe as before, on a variety of topics. The diſtance from the Hay-market to Welbeck-ſtreet, afforded him time, and ſhe liſtened to his diſcourſe with pleaſure, till the carriage ſtopped.

The ſtranger expreſſed his regret that his charge was over; then alighting, handed out his fair companion, and having ſeen her ſafe into the houſe, wiſhed her a good night, and bowing low, retired.

Louiſa had now perceived, by the light of the lamp in the entry, the uncommon elegance of his perſon, which had been ſcarcely noticed before, from

from the agitation of her ſpirits; and his figure ſeemed ſtill before her eyes, when ſhe entered the parlour, where ſhe found Lady Roſeville, and Sir Ralph Random, eſtabliſhed by the fire ſide, in great chairs, oppoſite to each other.

"Lord have mercy upon us!" cried Lady Roſeville, "where have you been? You have frightened me out of my wits (no traces of this, however, appeared, and the fragments of a ſupper that had been plentiful, were ſtill upon the table.) Robert is running all over the town to look for you—I could not think what was become of you; but you ſeem to have hurt your hand—what has happened to you?"

Louiſa then related the whole of her adventure, ſome ſlight circumſtances excepted; and her mother, with elevated hands and eyes, proteſted it was a mercy ſhe had not been killed.

"And pray who's this gentleman? What's his name? Where does he live? How came he there?"

Louiſa could only reply to the latter query, for ſhe had not thought of enquiring into the reſt.

"Well! I never knew the like!" cried Lady Roſeville, impatiently; then turning to Sir Ralph, "only think of her not even knowing his name!"

"It would not be amiſs," ſaid he, (who now for the firſt time opened his mouth,) "if your

Ladyſhip were to ſend and inform Lady Bridget, that Miſs Roſeville is ſafe."

"Aye to be ſure—ſhe ſent here juſt now in a fine fuſs; write her a note, do, good Sir Ralph, for I am in ſuch a flurry I can't."

"That is unneceſſary," anſwered he, "I will ſtop at her houſe myſelf, in my way home; and ſo, Ladies, I will wiſh you a good night."

Lady Roſeville ceremoniouſly conducted him to the door, and returning thence, ſhe obſerved, with her mouth purſed up, that he was a mighty friendly good ſort of a man.

Louiſa now be-thought herſelf of her hand—"Oh! aye, let me ſee it," cried Lady Roſeville, "yet, I'd rather not,—I can't bear the ſight of wounds—take a little refreſhment, and I'll ſend Lacely to you, who will apply ſome of her plaiſter to the cut, and it will be well to-morrow."

So ſaying, with the moſt philoſophic indifference, ſhe retired.

"Ah!" ſaid Louiſa to herſelf, "natural affection is leſs ſtrong than many people imagine;—like a languiſhing plant that withers, when expoſed to a fervid ſun, or to a winter's blaſt, ſo does the mere affection of inſtinct fade away, unleſs it be nurtured by endearing attentions, confirmed by habit, and matured by eſteem; and after all, how much ſenſibility is requiſite to give it ſtrength!

Mrs.

Mrs. Lacely's arrival interrupted her reflections; ſhe acquitted herſelf of her office of ſurgeon, and having prevailed on Louiſa to drink a glaſs of wine, attended her to bed, where ſhe in vain attempted to get ſome ſleep.

"It is ſingular," ſaid ſhe ſoftly, "how ſome people's voices, like a favourite air, thrill in one's ear; ſurely there was ſomething uncommonly ſweet in that ſtranger's accents; methinks I hear them ſtill; but ſo amiable are all the virtues, that doubtleſs each has a tone peculiar to itſelf; and that of humanity muſt be ſweet and gentle."

Having thus ſettled with herſelf, why the ſtranger's voice had made ſuch an impreſſion upon her, ſhe contraſted it with the naſal diſagreeable tone of Lord Pompouſton's, which now recurred to her mind with redoubled averſion.

"How different," thought ſhe, "would his behaviour have been in ſuch a caſe! Had he (which ſeems to me doubtful) expoſed his perſon to ſuch danger, how he would have exaggerated the peril he had been in! What thanks would he have deemed ſufficient for the obligation! Then, how incapable is he of treating a woman with reſpect and delicacy!"

In ſhort, the compariſon ſhe drew between him and her new acquaintance, was not a little in favour of the latter.

"To be ſure it was ſtupid of me," continued ſhe, "not to have aſked his name, it was ſo natural a queſtion! What could I have been thinking of? But probably he will ſend—no, perhaps, he will call himſelf to-morrow morning to enquire after me.—Well, then my curioſity will be gratified."

With theſe thoughts ſhe cloſed her eyes, and falling aſleep, dreamt of perils and dangers; horſes, coachmen, and chairmen; and ſtill more of knight-errants ſallying forth, and putting them all to flight: in ſhort, a variety of wild fancies diſturbed her reſt.

In the morning ſhe was ſcarcely dreſſed, though it was near ten o'clock (ſome hours beyond her uſual time of riſing), having been obliged to wait for Mr. Lacely's aſſiſtance, on account of her wounded hand, when ſhe was informed a perſon was waiting in the parlour to ſee her.

She would willingly have enquired who it was, but the ſervant, who brought the meſſage, did not give her time.

"'Tis a provoking thing," cried ſhe, looking at herſelf in the glaſs, "that Marianne does not arrive! What a figure my hair is!"

This was the firſt time ſhe had diſcovered her hair was ill arranged; and down ſhe haſtened, not without an extraordinary palpitation of heart, which

which occaſioned her for an inſtant to delay opening the door; when, who ſhould ſhe find, but Mr. Bangrove!

"Oh! dear, is it *you*, Sir!" cried ſhe, retreating half a ſtep; when recovering herſelf, ſhe deſired him to be ſeated.

"Why, whom did you expect to ſee, Madam?" ſaid Bangrove, bowing gravely, and ſtroaking down his ruffles, as he advanced to reach her a chair.

"Indeed Mr. Bangrove, not conceiving you could have any buſineſs with me," ſaid ſhe, colouring, "I thought, perhaps—I rather imagined—in ſhort, I did not think—"

"Good heaven, Madam!" cried he, obſerving her confuſion, "I hope you are not offended at my taking the liberty of calling, to pay my reſpects to you?"

"No, Sir, not in the leaſt."

"Beſides having this honour, I had another motive for this call," ſaid Bangrove; and, after a ſhort ſilence, he added, "I wiſhed, Madam, to communicate a matter of great importance; but, may I depend upon your ſecrecy?"

"If you have any doubts, you had better, Mr. Bangrove, not truſt me; and I warn you, that I do not like to make promiſes, before I know what I undertake."

" You are a very prudent young Lady: I thought ſo the firſt time I ſaw you; but, in the preſent caſe, you need be under no apprehenſion; I have only your good in view; it is right to give you ſome inſight into the characters which you will have to deal with: *you* only know Lady Roſeville by common report; *I* have long known and ſtudied her.

You are not ignorant, Madam, that at your grandmother's death, your mother applied to the court of Chancery, to petition for the guardianſhip of your perſon, which the late Sir Edward Roſeville, your honoured father, and my much-reſpected friend, thought fit to veſt in his mother (the late Lady Roſeville) inſtead of his wife; for reaſons, which though well known to myſelf, perhaps ought not to be communicated to you.

The preſent Lady Roſeville, thanks to my unwearied application, and good management, overruled the Court's objections, who, at firſt, rather leaned to the opinion, that you ought to continue under Dr. Sandolph's care; becauſe your grandmother (whoſe excellent character, and admirable prudence, which were univerſally acknowledged) had made him her executor; and recommended in her will, that he ſhould be entruſted with the care of your perſon, as well as of all that part of her property ſhe could bequeath to you.

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But as your reſidence with him would have been highly injurious to your mother, not only confirming the unfavourable prejudices againſt her, but would likewiſe deprive her of thoſe emoluments ſhe might reaſonably expect to derive from the maintenance that would be allowed to a Lady of your fortune; and as beſides, ſuch reſidence was in a manner excluding you from the world, where you were of an age to appear, in a ſtyle ſuitable to your birth and fortune: the court allowed the validity of theſe objections, eſpecially as I contrived to gloſs over thoſe circumſtances, which had induced your father to ſhew a preference ſo mortifying to his wife, in favour of his mother."

"Pardon me for interrupting you, Mr. Bangrove," cried Louiſa, "but I muſt ſay, I wiſh you had left this affair, as my excellent grandmother had ſettled it; eſpecially as my father had before ſhewn a marked diſapprobation to my living with my mother. Indeed you did wrong, very wrong; and I cannot think how you could preſume to impoſe falſehood on the court of Chancery: for when circumſtances are ſuppreſſed, or miſ-ſtated, truth is the ſacrifice; what thoſe were that you alluded to, I know not, and reſpect for my mother, forbids me to enquire. Yet, weak and bad, I muſt think that cauſe, where

'tis neceſſary, artfully to gloſs over facts, which you acknowledge you did."

Bangrove, who had rather expected to meet with compliments than rebukes, ſeemed ſomewhat diſconcerted; but willing, if poſſible, to impreſs her with an opinion of his candour, he acknowledged that his zeal for Lady Roſeville, had perhaps carried him too far; that he ſaw his error; "but," added he, "what is paſt, may yet be remedied; you may petition Chancery to be removed hence."

"That," cried ſhe, "would be highly diſreſpectful to my mother, and cannot now be thought of. My ſituation, before you took a part in my affairs, was ſuch as had been preſcribed for me by two worthy parents; and I could then, without offence to my mother, acquieſce in their determination; but the caſe now is very different."

"I am ſure, Miſs Roſeville," ſaid Bangrove, "had I known that I was diſobliging you, or, had Lady Roſeville's character been as clearly developed to me then, as it is at preſent, no conſideration ſhould have tempted me to have undertaken this buſineſs; and pretty thanks I have for it! All the while it was in agitation, Lady Roſeville treated me with extraordinary kindneſs; I was her dear Mr. Bangrove, at every word; ſhe conſulted me, before ſhe took any ſtep whatever;

was

was always aſking me to dinner, and ſending me preſents of game.

But no ſooner had ſhe gained her point, than I perceived a viſible alteration in her conduct and manners; ſhe grew diſtant, and reſerved. You, Madam, were witneſs to the cool reception I met from her Ladyſhip, the day of your arrival in town. By the bye, it was by mere chance that I was informed of that event, for ſhe had not the civility to invite me: yet, after all the trouble I had taken to ſerve her, I think ſhe might as well have aſked me, as Sir Ralph Random; however, if I pleaſed, I could account for the whole of her conduct. I ſee more than ſhe is aware of."

Then riſing, he whiſpered in Louiſa's ear, "take care of that fellow, that Sir Ralph Random; obſerve him well; he has a long head, I can tell you, and I bode no good from his aſſiduities here."

Louiſa, exceſſively tired of this converſation, and inclined to think that the intent of it had originated from pique and reſentment againſt her mother, rather than from friendly motives towards herſelf, now aroſe;

"As you have," ſaid ſhe, "fully explained, how I came to be taken from under Dr. Sandolph's care, if you have nothing material to ſay to me, I muſt beg leave, Sir, to retire; I feel

the ill effects of my accident laſt night, and am much indiſpoſed."

What that accident was, Bangrove deſired to know; and being informed, he pointed out to her the proper mode of puniſhing the delinquents, offering himſelf to undertake it; but ſhe declined his interference.

Then, after expreſſing much ſorrow at her miſhap, and ſtrongly recommending to her never to hint a ſyllable that he had ſaid; he added, that he hoped to be honoured with her confidence, and to convince her of the ardent deſire he had to ſerve her.

Her anſwer was civil, but cold and reſerved; and they parted, without her giving him hopes of any thing further, than to keep to herſelf his communications.

A man, capable of becoming a tool, to promote a wrong purpoſe, knowing it at the time to be ſo, and whoſe preſent regret ſeemed leſs the conviction of principle, than the reſult of mortification, had little chance of obtaining the eſteem and confidence of a diſpoſition, ſuch as Louiſa's, fraught with the pureſt ſentiments of delicacy and integrity.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

LOUISA had but juſt reached her apartment, before ſhe was ſummoned to her mother, whoſe countenance indicated a degree of ill humour, which ſhe had never yet obſerved it to wear.

"What buſineſs, Miſs Roſeville, can you poſſibly have with Bangrove? I heard, with no ſmall ſurprize, that he had been ſome time ſhut up with you!"

"I ſuppoſe, Madam," anſwered Louiſa, "he thought it a mark of reſpect to your Ladyſhip to call upon me."

"Nonſenſe; he is a meddling fool. And pray how came he (ſince he is ſo mighty reſpectful) to march off without ſeeing me?"

"You were not out of your chamber, I believe, Madam, when he went away."

"Well, not to loſe time in talking of him, I ſhall only juſt caution you not to encourage his forwardneſs. He is often prying, officious, and impertinent: but as he is uſeful in his profeſſion, thoſe who have real buſineſs with him, condeſcend to bear with his faults, in favour of his abilities—but," added ſhe, with an ironical air, "*you* are not encumbered with affairs of any kind, and are

diſpenſed from cultivating an intimacy with Mr. Bangrove. I can tell you, while you have been prating with him, you have loſt the fineſt opportunity in the world; what it was, you ſhall hear. A young man, about half an hour ago, came to enquire after your health; it certainly could be no other than the gentleman who brought you home laſt night; but now comes the provoking part of the ſtory; that fool, Robert, never had the wit to aſk his name! And in anſwer to his enquiry, whether he could not ſee you, the blockhead told him, you were engaged on particular buſineſs with a gentleman!"

Louiſa coloured a deep ſcarlet; and reſolved (but not in conſequence of her mother's lecture) that nothing ſhould prevail on her to admit of a private viſit again.

Though Bangrove had made no very favourable impreſſion on her, and at this moment, an unpleaſing ſhade darkened over his image in her mind, yet ſhe was too candid to affix to it thoſe additional tints which her mother had ſo freely diſpenſed. Other ideas, not unmixed with regret and vexation, ſoon chaſed him from her thoughts; ſhe was roufed from theſe by the entrance of Lord Pompouſton, his aunt, and couſin, who came to enquire how ſhe did, after the accident of the preceding night.

They

They all ſpoke at once, aſking a thouſand queſtions, and never waiting for any reply; at laſt, after many interruptions, they allowed her to tell her ſtory.

"Had I been preſent," cried Lord Pompouſton, in a rage, "I'd have hewn thoſe dogs of coachmen into a thouſand pieces! but in this country we have no *police*, no regulation at all; ſuch a thing could not have happened in any other part of Europe."

And he ſtalked about the room, uttering to himſelf the moſt bitter execrations againſt the whole tribe of the whip, when ſeeming ſuddenly to recollect himſelf, he ſaid, "One thing you have forgot to tell us,—pray who was this happy man who had the honour to eſcort you home?

"Indeed, my Lord, I don't know," anſwered Louiſa, a little embaraſſed.

"Was he a gentleman, do you think?"

"Certainly—did not his behaviour announce him to be ſuch?" ſaid ſhe, rather impatiently, vexed that ſhe was not better informed herſelf concerning the ſtranger.

"Why he might," ſaid Lord Pompouſton, "be a gentleman *ſoi diſant*, and yet be nobody of any figure."

A letter now was delivered to Louiſa; "the man who brought it," ſaid Robert, "is below, and

and waits for an anſwer." She glanced a look at the ſeal, then at the ſuperſcription, and was ſliding it into her pocket, when Lady Roſeville cried pettiſhly, "Why do you keep people waiting? Who is that letter from?"

Louiſa finding ſhe muſt open it, retired to the window, and breaking the ſeal, with a ſlight tremour, read as follows:

"MADAM,

"I thought myſelf ſingularly unfortunate, that you were not viſible to me this morning, though I am ſenſible I waited on you at an undue hour: but the exceſſive anxiety I felt for your health, after the terrible alarm you had laſt night, overruled in me all ſenſe of propriety, and I hope, will obtain your pardon.

I have been to wait on Mr. Snelgrove, and Mr. Taylor, the maſters of thoſe wretches, who had like to have occaſioned a calamity, which, (from the few ſhort moments I had the happineſs of paſſing with you) muſt, I am convinced, have been conſidered as irreparable, by all thoſe who know you.

"I found Mr. Snelgrove exceedingly out of humour at his carriage being broken to pieces, and that his coachman had abſconded: whenever he is found,

found, I fancy his maſter will not be backward in puniſhing him as he deſerves.

" Mr. Taylor's, upon being ſent for by his maſter, appeared, and received a ſevere reprehenſion; yet, by his own account, and by the concurrent teſtimony of ſeveral witneſſes, whom I myſelf examined, he was not the aggreſſor; and as he ſeemed truly penitent for the terror he had occaſioned you, I was prevailed upon at laſt to deſiſt from bringing him to puniſhment, upon condition that he obtained your forgiveneſs: his doom, therefore, reſts with you, as likewiſe his continuance with Mr. Taylor, whom he has ſerved ten years.

" Ah, Madam! he has little to fear; for had he the ſenſe to read in the moſt intelligent eyes in the world, he would find mercy, and all its kindred virtues there.

" I am under the neceſſity of leaving town immediately, otherwiſe I would have made a ſecond effort to have paid my reſpects to you.

" I have the honour to be,

" Madam,

" Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

DANEFIELD."

Groſvenor-ſquare, Feb. 12, 178—.

Lord Pompouſton, who had placed himſelf ſo that

that he had been enabled to watch Louiſa very attentively, all the while ſhe was reading this letter, now exclaimed,

" That's a mighty long letter! Miſs Roſeville, and ſeems to contain ſomething very intereſting, if I may judge by the effect it has on your countenance."

" However ſagacious your Lordſhip may be," ſaid ſhe, gravely, walking to the door, " for this once, you are miſtaken."

Louiſa, as ſoon as ſhe had reached the parlour, ſent for the man, whom ſhe cordially forgave, charging him with a note for his maſter, to ſignify ſhe had done ſo.

" And am I to carry nothing to my Lord, Madam?" ſaid he; " his horſes are waiting at his door; pray do your Ladyſhip ſend him a line."

Louiſa pauſed—" Well, friend, wait a moment in the hall, and I will write a line."

She took up a pen—laid it down again—made a few turns acroſs the room—" it can't ſurely be improper to write one line," thought ſhe; and then ſhe lamented that her inexperience could find no aſſiſtance in her mother's counſels, ſince the tenour of her conduct was ſuch, as rather to produce diſtruſt, than confidence. Again the pen was in her fingers, and ſhe began:—

" My Lord—no—pſhaw! I cannot write a let-

letter—yet—well, a note—aye, that is the thing;" and ſhe took another ſheet, and wrote,

" Miſs Roſeville preſents her compliments to Lord Danefield, and a thouſand thanks for his attention to her; ſhe is extremely ſorry to have occaſioned his Lordſhip ſo much trouble, and ſtill more, that by the blunder of a ſervant this morning, ſhe was deprived of an opportunity of making her acknowledgments in perſon.

" As ſhe feels no ill effects from the accident of laſt night, ſhe has no pretence to with-hold her pardon from Mr. Taylor's ſervant; Lord Danefield too ſeems to think him the *leaſt* to blame; and this alone would have decided her to diſmiſs him, with her hearty forgiveneſs."

Welbeck-ſtreet, Feb. 12, 178—.

The man being diſpatched, and Lord Danefield's letter carefully depoſited in her pocket, ſhe returned to the drawing-room; and the more willingly, as ſhe had ſeen from the parlour window, Lady Bridget's carriage drive from the door. But, what was her amazement, to find the object ſhe wiſhed the moſt to avoid, ſtill there, and alone!

The retreating motion ſhe made, occaſioned him to advance, and attempt to take her hand, which ſhe inſtantly withdrew.

" Upon my ſoul, Miſs Roſeville," cried he,

" you

" you are of a moſt cruel diſpoſition, or you would not think of leaving me alone."

" I have buſineſs, Lord Pompouſton," ſaid ſhe, coldly, " and when I came here, I thought to have found my mother;" and ſhe courteſied, determined to retire.

" I cannot part with you," cried he, " indulge me with your company for a few moments;—but finding, that unmindful of his requeſt, and diſpleaſed at being detained, ſhe was going, he forcibly ſeized her hand.

" You ſhan't ſtir, upon my honour! Miſs Roſeville."

" Shall not!" exclaimed ſhe, ſtruggling to get from him, " whence this preſumption?"

" Nay, don't frown; when you can be a Venus, why be a Juno? Thoſe lovely eyes were formed, not to dart anger, but to expreſs all the melting tenderneſs of love; ſoft roſy ſmiles to play about that tempting mouth, and——."

" Diſengage my hand inſtantly," cried Louiſa, not attempting to diſguiſe her indignation; " and never offend my ears with ſuch impertinent rhapſodies."

" I will releaſe your hand," ſaid he, " if you will diſmiſs your anger; but be not too eager to leave me, elſe I ſhall think that letter, that intereſting letter you received a little while ago, contained

tained an appointment from ſome favoured lover, which you are in haſte to fulfil."

"I am perfectly indifferent what you think," ſaid Louiſa, angrily, ſpringing forward; "and will not ſtay a moment."

And ſhe ruſhed out of the room, much ruffled at Lord Pompouſton's inſolence. His being left alone in the drawing room, appeared the effect of contrivance in which her mother muſt have had a ſhare; and it pained her to think that this preſumptuous man's pretenſions ſhould be thus encouraged.

To charm away theſe unpleaſant reflections, Lord Danefield's letter was produced; every line was commented upon, and all that had prepoſſeſſed her in his favour, again recurred.

Lady Roſeville's entrance rouſed her from a profound reverie.

"Well, Louiſa," cried ſhe in tolerable good humour, "what paſſed between you and Lord Pompouſton? What did he ſay to you? Did he propoſe to you? And whence came the letter that Robert brought you?"

"Lord Pompouſton," anſwered ſhe, "ſeemed to have propoſed to himſelf to be inſolent, had I been of a humour to have borne it."

"Inſolent, indeed! why pray what did he do?" "He forcibly detained me, while he poured forth an impertinent rhapſody, ill calculated to be uttered

tered to a young perſon, whoſe delicacy he ought to reſpect."

"I fear you are a great prude, and too exacting; it is not the faſhion now for men to be ſo very reſpectful. Think no more of the paſt, for Lord Pompouſton is a gay young man, accuſtomed to be well received by the fineſt ladies; which may ſomewhat excuſe his behaviour to you, if not perfectly regular; and I charge you when next you ſee him, don't draw up, and look croſs at him."

"But I ſhall in future take care to ſhun his company as much as poſſible; and ſurely, Madam," added ſhe, "you muſt yourſelf feel the propriety of this."

"Not in the leaſt—I deſire you won't be abſurd. For my part I think you ought to be proud of the attentions of a man of his figure. However, let us drop this ſubject, and now for the letter."

"The letter! Oh!——I—It was only about the coachman, who came to apologize for what happened laſt night."

"But who ſent the letter? Was it your knight-errant? Who, and what is he?

"Lord Danefield, I underſtand, Madam."

"Lord Danefield! indeed!" drawing up her head, and croſſing her arms; "Lord Danefield!" repeated

repeated ſhe, "well, what does he ſay? ſhew me the letter."

Louiſa, who dreaded the indelicacy of her remarks, replied; that ſhe had it not about her, and upon being deſired to fetch it, ſaid careleſsly, ſhe had put it among other papers, and might not eaſily find it.

"Was ever any thing ſo careleſs as not to keep this Lord's letter! Robert," cried ſhe to a footman, who was making up the fire, "fetch me inſtantly the book of Peerage; he muſt have lately come out, for I do'nt know him. No, no; you need not; here comes Sir Ralph; he knows every body; and he will tell us all about him immediately."

Lady Roſeville did not ſuffer Sir Ralph Random to advance far into the room, before ſhe began eagerly to interrogate him on the chapter of Lord Danefield.

"I know nothing about him," anſwered he, drily.

"What, not know Lord Danefield! I thought you knew every body; the hiſtory of their families, and connections."

"Suppoſing I do, what of that? I may know there is ſuch a man, and that he is a minor. This account will not be very ſatisfactory to your curioſity."

"But is he a man of an ancient family?"

"Aye,

"Aye, to be ſure; we are all of an ancient family: he would tell you, I ſuppoſe, that *his* was ſettled here before the conqueſt."

"And what of his fortune?"

"He would not I believe boaſt of that; he is as poor as a rat: his father was an extravagant fellow; married for love forſooth; and the ſon is no better."

"But, Sir," ſaid Louiſa, "as he is ſo very young, he can ſcarcely yet have had an opportunity of diſplaying a very profuſe diſpoſition; and I underſtood that you had no acquaintance with him, ſo poſſibly you may have been miſinformed."

"Aye—but I ſhould have been ſurprized had you continued ſilent; I knew well enough you would take his part; for he is in your eyes the gallant hero of a romance: yet I believe he is more diſpoſed to injure, than to ſuccour, your ſex in general."

"Has he then the character of a libertine?" aſked Louiſa.

"Yes, yes; he is a libertine, as all young men now a-days are; and you like him the better for it."

"Your opinion of me, Sir," ſaid Louiſa, haughtily, "is very unjuſt, and I hope equally ſo of Lord Danefield; nor can I doubt but there are numbers of women, as well as myſelf, who deteſt the character, and ſcorn the imputation."

And

And with an air of offended dignity ſhe left the room; overhearing Lady Roſeville ſay, as ſhe ſhut the door, "Oh, you can't think how prudiſh and ſentimental ſhe is!"

Louiſa could not help reflecting with diſguſt, on the unamiable diſpoſition ſhe had diſcovered in ſome of thoſe who formed her mother's ſociety; and even in thoſe, who were the leaſt exceptionable, ſhe had found nothing to admire. "Ah! where ſhall I find," ſaid ſhe, with a ſigh, "the feeling heart, the ſympathetic mind, whoſe ſentiments would correſpond with my own!"

Ruffled as ſhe had been by a ſucceſſion of unpleaſant events that morning, ſhe had not recollected that this was Sunday; for attendance at church ſeemed a thing quite out of the queſtion from the higheſt to the loweſt in the family: but much as Louiſa wiſhed to go thither, it was now too late.

Deſirous, however, of enjoying ſome ſerious hours, ſhe determined to decline attending her mother to a concert that evening, to which ſhe knew ſhe was engaged. Her ſore hand furniſhed her with a pretence, that ſhe hoped would be admitted; but no ſooner had ſhe ſignified her reſolution than ſhe drew upon herſelf the keeneſt reproaches; her plea was conſidered as frivolous.

"What

"What harm could it poſſibly do her hand to go out?"

"Poſſibly, none," replied Louiſa; "but may I not be permitted to paſs this one evening out of a crowd? after having been ſo diſſipated the reſt of the week?"

"What," cried Lady Roſeville, "have I got a methodiſt in my family? Pray lay aſide theſe ſerious airs, for I ſhall not humour them, I promiſe you. It would be mighty pretty, truly, to ſee me walk into the concert-room by myſelf, becauſe my pious daughter choſe to ſtay at home!"

Louiſa then made uſe of an argument which had ſome weight with her mother. She reminded her of a ball, to which ſhe was engaged for the next Tueſday; and hinted, that unleſs ſhe took ſome care of her hand, (which felt ſtiff and ſore) and found herſelf in better health, ſhe ſhould be obliged to ſend an excuſe for that.

After ſome grumbling, Lady Roſeville acquieſced in her paſſing that evening in her own apartment; where ſhe enjoyed ſome tranquil hours, and indulged herſelf in the pleaſure of writing to her venerable friend, Doctor Sandolph.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning, and moſt of the ſucceeding ones, was ſpent in ſhopping, viſiting, and in obſerving the progreſs of the workmen, in Lady Roſeville's new houſe; the evenings were devoted to diſſipation. And the ſame people, Louiſa had at firſt ſeen at her mother's, continued to be her conſtant, but not approved, companions; a cloſer acquaintance did not raiſe them in her eſteem.

Lord Pompouſton, ſo far from apologizing for the freedom of his behaviour, daily gave her freſh offence, by his impertinent manner of diſplaying his admiration: to his haughty airs and forward addreſs, circumſtanced as ſhe was, ſhe could only return repulſive looks, with language the moſt cold and reſerved; and when conſtrained to ſit at the ſame table with him, ſhe ſtudiouſly endeavoured to place herſelf as far from him as ſhe could.

Her eyes in vain ſearched where ever ſhe went, for the only intereſting object ſhe had yet ſeen. He did not appear; and ſhe thought he ſtaid a great while in the country.

Thus paſſed a fortnight; during which period ſhe was preſented at court, and Lady Roſeville removed into her houſe in Portman-ſquare.

Soon after, Louiſa's maid (Marianne) arrived with her baggage; this girl had attended her many years, and was deſerving of the affection her miſtreſs entertained for her. She brought her ſome letters from her young friends in the *Abbaïe de Panthremont*; and from ſome of the nuns whoſe eſteem ſhe had acquired, during her reſidence in the convent.

Louiſa regretted that none of theſe amiable friends were in England, and that ſhe could not write to them without reſtraint. Her heart, naturally tender, longed to find ſome object capable of rouſing it from its preſent apathy.

She had now from neceſſity formed ſome degree of intimacy with Miſs Benſley, in which inclination had little ſhare. After an attentive examination into her character, in hopes of diſcovering ſome amiable qualities, ſhe found her mind a perfect blank. If ſhe had no malice, or ill-nature in her diſpoſition, ſhe was altogether as deſtitute of generous or benevolent ſentiments; her ear could liſten to a tale of woe, but it never reached her heart; *that* was guarded by the moſt frigid inſenſibility. Dreſs and diſſipation, were the only ſubjects that engaged her thoughts. To form a ſplendid connection, was her only wiſh: *this* had had been inculcated by Lady Bridget, who had taught her from her infancy, to conſider *that* as

the

the ſole end of an education, which had been very expenſive, and far exceeded what ſhe might have expected from her aunt's ſlender fortune, who had denied herſelf almoſt the neceſſaries of life, to enable her to make a figure: but Lady Bridget's vanity ſecretly compenſated to her for theſe ſacrifices; ſhe flattered herſelf that ſhe had produced in her niece, a proof of her own ſuperior talents; and that the period was not diſtant, when the grand point to which all her wiſhes had been directed, would be attained. As to mental qualities, they had been wholly diſregarded: Lady Bridget was perſuaded that her *elève* paſſed in the world as highly accompliſhed; and as ſhe herſelf thought of no other merit, ſhe imagined others would be as eaſily ſatisfied.

Yet how did theſe boaſted acquirements ſhrink away, when inveſtigated by a diſcerning eye!— It is true, ſhe danced with preciſion; but without the leaſt grace. Her execution on the harpſichord was brilliant, but often ſlovenly; and always void of taſte or feeling. Her aunt's apartment was decorated with beautiful drawings, aſcribed to her; but done with her maſter at her elbow; and the barometer is not more affected by the air, than was her genius by his abſence; for no ſooner did he depart, than it ſunk to the loweſt ſtate. She could converſe very fluently in French and Italian; but,

her terms were ill choſen, and her accent falſe. Of hiſtory ſhe knew little, and of geography leſs; and diverted Lord Pompouſton, as much as ſhe mortified Lady Bridget, by aſking him one day at a great dinner, whether China was not in America.

Though Miſs Benſley ſtood in awe of Louiſa, ſhe could not help feeling for her ſome degree of affection: for the ſweetneſs of our heroine's manners, her ſolicitude to oblige, and the power ſhe had of entertaining, by the variety of talents ſhe poſſeſſed, had an irreſiſtible faſcination, of which *even* Miſs Benſley was ſenſible. Other circumſtances conduced to render her a deſirable companion; ſhe ſeemed to have no ſchemes herſelf, and evidently to diſregard admiration; Miſs Benſley, therefore, did not apprehend that ſhe would attempt to eclipſe her.

But had this inſipid girl poſſeſſed leſs conceit, ſhe would have diſcovered, that where ever Louiſa appeared, *ſhe* never failed to become the principal figure in the groupe, to which every eye was attracted.

With an enchanting form, modelled as it were by the Graces; with features the moſt elegantly turned, and with a countenance in which ſweetneſs and ſpirit were moſt happily blended—who could ſee her without admiration! who could fail of diſtinguiſhing her animated complexion

plexion from the fixed hue of art! or her charming dark eyes, large, but not round, beautifully fringed, and expreſſive of every paſſion that could find place in ſo pure a breaſt—from the vacant lack-luſtre eyes of her companion! What but a pre-engaged heart could reſiſt being caught in her ſilken treſſes, which when ſhe was ſeated at her toilette, hung in gloſſy waves down to the very ground!

Yet theſe were her leaſt perfections: and all lovely as ſhe was in perſon, in mind ſhe was yet more perfect, though not faultleſs; for where does that human creature exiſt, exempt from every failing? To deſcribe imaginary excellencies is not intended; but to deduce from *Nature* Louiſa's character, and to relate her life, will beſt develope *that*.

As Lady Roſeville was ſeldom diſpoſed to ſpare her carriage to her daughter in the morning, Louiſa rejoiced that her ſituation in Portman-ſquare was ſo convenient for walking; the vicinity of the fields often tempted her thither.

In one of theſe walks, accompanied by her faithful Marianne, ſhe perceived, at a diſtance, a gentleman, who, after tottering ſome paces, leant againſt a poſt, as if falling into a fit; and ſome groans which reached her ear, as ſhe haſtily advanced, made her ſtill more accelerate her pace.

Upon coming up to him, with her ſalts in her hand, ſhe was terrified at his ghaſtly appearance; his eyes were half cloſed, his complexion of a deadly hue, and his jaw fallen, while a white froth bubbled out of his mouth.

With Marianne's aſſiſtance, ſhe contrived gently to ſlide him down, and having ſome *eau de Cologne* in her pocket, ſhe poured a little of it into his mouth, while Marianne chafed his temples. Their joint efforts were attended with ſucceſs; by degrees the colour returned into his cheeks; his mouth cloſed, and he raiſed his eyes towards his benefactreſs.

"Oh, Heaven! where am I!" cried he, "are you an angel come to uſher me into another world?"

"A poor frail mortal," replied Louiſa, with a ſmile, "and rejoiced that you are likely to continue in *this*."

The gentleman now would have riſen, but Louiſa adviſed him to ſit quiet ſome minutes longer, and to take a little more of her *eau de Cologne*.

"I ſhould be afraid to diſpute your pleaſure," ſaid he, "for I am not yet quite certain, that you are not a being of a ſuperior order—ſuch a form, ſuch gentle accents, and ſuch compaſſion for a ſtranger!—Ah! pardon me, if I juſt touch this lovely

lovely white hand, only to convince myſelf that you are a mortal."

"It might not be amiſs for you," ſaid Louiſa, "if I had ſupernatural powers; I could then inſtantly convey you to your home; but as it is, I think it will be neceſſary to find either a chair, or a carriage; for it would be imprudent, Sir, after ſuch an attack, to attempt walking, and perhaps you have ſome diſtance to go."

And ſhe looked about to ſee if ſhe could find any perſon to ſend on an errand, but the field was quite empty.

"I am a pretty good walker," ſhe continued; "and as I live very near, I will run home, and ſend a ſervant for a chair; that, I think, will be the beſt; and as you ſtill look but indifferently, my maid ſhall, in the mean while, remain with you, for fear of a relapſe."

"Ah! rather, young Lady, ſtay yourſelf; and, ſince you are ſo kind and conſiderate, diſpatch your maid on this errand."

But Louiſa, who was as prudent as humane, civilly declined to ſtay, and wiſhing the ſtranger better, departed.

"I dare not," cried he, "encroach upon ſuch goodneſs; but at leaſt tell me, Madam, to whom I am ſo much obliged?"

"My name is Roſeville, Sir."

" Roſeville! Oh God! Roſeville do you ſay? what the daughter of the late Sir Edward Roſeville?"

" The ſame, Sir—Were you acquainted with my father? But methinks you change colour; is your indiſpoſition returning?

" No, Madam—No—excuſe me from further diſcourſe; let me not detain you—Good day to you, Madam."

The cool air, with which theſe words were uttered, ſo different from the ſort of rapture that had ſeemed to poſſeſs him, and the exclamations which had eſcaped him, on hearing the name of Roſeville, aſtoniſhed Louiſa. She now almoſt wiſhed to ſtay behind, to penetrate into this myſtery; but again prudence forbade her remaining alone with a ſtranger; but before ſhe left him, ſhe caſt an obſerving and anxious glance at his figure.

He ſeemed above forty years of age; and though not handſome, had a very noble air, great dignity in his manner, yet not unmixed with pride.

Louiſa longed for Marianne's return. " Well," cried ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw her, " what did the ſtranger ſay further?"

" Not one word, Madam; he ſeemed loſt in thought, 'till the chair you ſent, arrived, when he would have forced a couple of guineas into my hand;

hand; but I would not take them, as I remembered your maxim, that "humanity is a debt due to our fellow creatures, and to diſcharge it, is a reward in itſelf,"

"You are a good girl," ſaid Louiſa; "keep in this opinion."

Louiſa was ſo full of this adventure, that ſhe could not refrain from mentioning it to her mother, who only obſerved, that for her part ſhe had no notion of ſuch romantic compaſſion; that ſhe thought the ſtranger meant no good by his affected exclamations; and that had ſhe remained behind, perhaps he would have robbed her.

Louiſa in vain reminded her, that he ſeemed quite a man of faſhion; and that he had even offered her ſervant money; but Lady Roſeville, though ſhe could not ſeriouſly believe that her daughter had been in danger of being robbed, perſiſted in ſhaking her head with an air of incredulity.

The evening of this day, Lady Bridget Wilford had a little muſic, not a ſettled concert, but an accidental thing, occaſioned by Miſs Benſley's having juſt received from abroad a new compoſition, and ſeveral muſical people being preſent, it was agreed to try it.

Miſs Benſley, confident, though ignorant, at-

tempted to execute her part, but ſo very ill, that the piece was pronounced odious.

Mr. Melcomb (one of the company) who performed in a maſterly ſtyle on the violin, alone ventured to aſſert it had merit, and even to hint, that the diſcord which had grated the ears of every one, aroſe from want of ſkill in ſome of the performers, glancing a look at Miſs Benſley.

Lady Bridget, who pretended now to recollect that Louiſa was muſical, coolly ſaid, by way of proving that her niece's execution had not been amiſs, and that the piece was in fact execrable,

" I think, Miſs Roſeville, you play; let us ſee what you can make of this compoſition."

Louiſa modeſtly took Miſs Benſley's place at the harpſichord; and after a prelude, which occaſioned the *connoiſſeurs* to caſt upon each other very ſignificant looks, ſhe executed the piece with ſuch taſte and juſtneſs, as aſtoniſhed the reſt of the performers. The room echoed with *brava! brava!* every body was delighted with the compoſition; and Louiſa, who had reſcued it from unmerited diſgrace, was eagerly preſſed to retain her ſeat, and indulge the company with another piece.

Upon which ſhe played a *rondeaux*, which enchanted them all; and every one was deſirous of knowing who compoſed it—but nothing further could be learned, than that it was the compoſition

ſition of a friend; and by a faint bluſh that overſpread her cheek as ſhe ſpoke, Mr. Melcomb ſuſpected it was her own, which indeed was the caſe.

In the mean while Lady Bridget had been ſwelling with envy and vexation; and was not a little angry with herſelf, for having been deceived by the modeſt account Louiſa had given of her own qualifications, which had made her depart from her rule, of never aſking any perſon to play in her houſe, where ſhe preſumed her niece alone ought to ſhine.

Determined to wreſt from Louiſa the laurels ſhe had gained, ſhe produced a ſonata, which Miſs Benſley had played a thouſand times, and knew by heart; this too by dint of practice, and her maſter's repeated leſſons, ſhe could play with ſomething like taſte. During the performance of this piece, Lady Bridget ſat beating time, and exclaiming, "Oh charming! delightful! nobody, *Madam*," ſaid ſhe to the lady next to her, (the word Madam pronounced with a particular broad twang) "plays in ſuch a ſtyle as my niece! There was *Signior* Flummeroſi here laſt winter, and he declared that with all his knowledge of muſic, he, (though a profeſſor) could do nothing like her, and that in all Italy, nobody pretended to ſuch execution. I don't mean to make invidious compariſons; but, Madam, every one

muſt acknowledge that Miſs Benſley has a certain way of running over the keys with her fine long fingers, peculiar to herſelf, and which no perſon can come up to.

Now, there's Miſs Roſeville, a fine player to be ſure; but ſhe glides ſo gently over the inſtrument, that you ſcarcely perceive her hand moves: her performance, *entre nous*, was quite inſipid; it had no fire, no brilliancy."

She then aroſe, and ran round the room, endeavouring to extort commendations for her niece: every perſon preſent would have laughed, had they dared.

And Miſs Benſley, who had felt no jealouſy of Louiſa, becauſe ſhe was not ſenſible of her ſuperiority, received the falſe praiſe which originated in ridicule, as a tribute to which he had ever been accuſtomed, and which ſhe naturally expected.

Lord Pompouſton, during the whole evening, had perſecuted our heroine more than ordinarily: his bold eyes had conſtantly been on the watch to meet hers, which, amidſt the applauſe ſhe received, were filled with a baſhful, but charming confuſion. He had been very officious in placing her ſeat, turning over the leaves of her book, and had hung over her, enraptured, all the while ſhe had been at the inſtrument.

"Upon my ſoul, Melcomb," ſaid he, in her hearing,

hearing, "I don't believe there is ſuch another creature in the world! Look at her round poliſhed arms! Only obſerve the graceful motion of that little hand! With what pathos ſhe performed that adagio! I'll tell you what, Sir, few of the *dilettanti*, I believe, underſtand muſic ſo well as myſelf; and I vow to God, *I* never heard a more perfect performance."

When Lady Bridget had triumphed in her niece's ſuppoſed ſuperiority, Lord Pompouſton loſt all patience:—"Lord God! Madam," cried he, "you are enough to turn the girl's brain; the poor thing will never play, as long as ſhe lives; and they who ſay otherwiſe, deſerve the fate of Midas."

This ſpeech put Lady Bridget into a violent paſſion; and Miſs Benſley complained, that her couſin was always ſaying ſome rude thing to mortify her.

"But better judges, however, than your Lordſhip," cried ſhe, much nettled, "commend me very much; remember what Flummeroſi ſaid."

"You little ſilly puſs," anſwered Lord Pompouſton, "did you not perceive that he was laughing at you? My aunt, however, to do her juſtice, paid moſt liberally for his flattery, which intoxicated her as well as you." And with a contemptuous ſhrug, he turned from her.

When

When Lady Roſeville and her daughter were ſeated in the carriage, on their return home, the former, who was in high good humour (and not a little delighted at the jokes that had paſſed on her dear friend and her niece, though ſhe had not dared to take a part in them) expreſſed her ſatisfaction at Louiſa's ſucccеſs; but chiefly, in regard to the effect it ſeemed to have on Lord Pompouſton. "I knew not," added ſhe, "that you was ſuch a great muſician—you like to hide your talents in a napkin; all other young people wiſh to diſplay theirs, as it is natural they ſhould; but mere accident calls forth yours."

"They can have no merit," replied Louiſa, "if they are obtruded upon any one; but, Madam; ſince I am ſo happy to find I can contribute to your amuſement, I ſhall be more aſſiduous in cultivating thoſe I may have for muſic."

The evening following, the ſame party met at Mr. Melcomb's, who had at Lady Bridget Wilford's engaged them to a little muſic, and ſupper. The performers here were very ſelect; the pieces well choſen; the room quite adapted for the purpoſe, and not at all crouded.

Mrs. Raby (Mr. Melcomb's ſiſter) aſſiſted him in doing the honours of the houſe; and Louiſa, who, except the memorable evening ſhe had paſſed

at

at the opera, had found every other long and dull, thought this both ſhort and pleaſant.

She was particularly charmed with Mrs. Raby, and with reaſon.

This lady was a young widow, not more than two and twenty, whoſe open countenance, prepoſſeſſed at firſt ſight in her favour, and whoſe character, upon a better acquaintance, confirmed all which *that* had promiſed. Her figure was light and elegant; ſhe had no regularity of feature; but her laughing eyes, her dimpled cheek, and ivory teeth, rendered her face very pleaſing. Her manner was eaſy, polite, and very ſprightly.

Louiſa's appearance had ſtruck her extremely when ſhe had ſeen her at the opera; ſhe had ever ſince longed to gain her acquaintance; but till this evening, ſhe had had no opportunity of being introduced to her: delighted to receive her at Mr. Melcomb's, and charmed with her muſical talents, ſhe paid her the moſt particular attention; and requeſted, that from that time all forms might be diſpenſed with, and that an interchange of viſits might take place, as often as could be done, with convenience.

Louiſa, who had not one female acquaintance that her judgment could approve of, gladly liſtened to a propoſal which promiſed her ſo much pleaſure; and the frequent meetings which enſued between

 theſe

theſe young ladies, ſoon produced the ſtricteſt intimacy.

Miſs Benſley's heart was too cold to be affected by this circumſtauce; accuſtomed at home to be conſidered as every thing that was charming, ſhe was perſuaded ſhe was ſo, and only pitied Louiſa's want of taſte, in the preference ſhe ſhewed Mrs. Raby.

Mrs. Raby had been married at ſixteen, to a man much older than herſelf, and whoſe perſon had little to recommend it to a young girl. His character however, was reſpectable, his fortune eaſy, and he doated upon her; but as he had been entirely her father's choice, and that her inclinations had not been in the leaſt conſulted, ſhe did not at firſt love, though ſhe could not fail of eſteeming him.

Afterwards, when ſhe became a mother, and paſſionately fond of two lovely children, (a boy and a girl) ſhe conſidered *their* parent, with a degree of regard, that ſhe had not felt for him as *her* huſband; and had he not, by an untimely death been taken from her, it is probable, from his kind behaviour, and the excellence of her diſpoſition, that ſhe would have become tenderly attached to him.

She was but nineteen when he died; too young, in the opinion of her friends, to be left entirely

to

to her own diſcretion; and it was ſettled ſhe ſhould reſide with her brother, who undertook the guardianſhip of her children; theſe were amply provided for, and ſhe had a handſome jointure.

Mr. Melcomb was ten years older than his ſiſter, had a very conſiderable fortune, and had entered into the world, with many perſonal advantages, as well as thoſe that could be acquired from a liberal education,

Agreeable in his figure, amiable in his diſpoſition, with principles of the higheſt honour and integrity, with manners poliſhed, not only by having early in life been introduced into the beſt company in his own country, but alſo by ſeveral years reſidence in ſome foreign parts: it may eaſily be imagined, that the acquaintance of ſuch a man, muſt have been eagerly ſought after, by the old ladies for their daughters, and by the young ones, for themſelves.

But, whether from a love of liberty, or, from a dread of a modern wife, Melcomb had hitherto reſiſted all their allurements: yet, being of a domeſtic turn, he had gladly received his ſiſter, and her children, under his roof; he now truſted to her the management of his family; found in her an amiable companion, formed to grace his houſe, and to charm his gueſts; one, who after every abſence, received him with ſmiles, and good humour;

mour; without ever teazing him with any of that impertinent curioſity, to which ſo many women are inclined.

Both the brother and ſiſter loved muſic; he excelled in it, and ſhe had a ſweet voice, which had been greatly improved by his inſtructions.

Yet there was a circumſtance which threatened to blunt the finer feelings of Melcomb's mind, and inſenſibly to rub off ſomewhat of the poliſh of his manners; this was an inordinate rage, which had ſeized him about two years ſince, for the faſhionable art of boxing.

At firſt, he contented himſelf with being merely a ſpectator of thoſe famous matches that have been fought; but, fired with emulation, he ſoon longed himſelf to engage in them, and now boxing was become the grand buſineſs of his life, and occaſioned him often to deſert good company to mix in very bad. His delight was to contend with his inferiors; his ambition to be conſidered as a man of extraordinary ſtrength; occaſionally to amuſe himſelf in diſpenſing black eyes, and i contriving, as often as poſſible, to ſet the rabble together by the ears.

How politic ſoever it may be to encourage boxing amongſt the lower claſs of people to keep up the national courage, and counteract the effeminacy ſo prevalent amongſt the preſent race of young

young men, it ſurely never can reflect *much* honour on a gentleman to ſoil his fingers in theſe conflicts; nor is it much to the credit of his humanity, to incite poor wretches, who have no perſonal enmity, to maim, or knock each others brains out, to furniſh him with amuſement! If they fight indeed, from a principle of honour, ſuch a motive may deſerve his countenance; but, as they are much more frequently inſtigated to theſe bloody battles by avarice, certainly they ought not wantonly to be encouraged.

By degrees, Melcomb, accuſtomed daily to theſe ſcenes, converſed willingly on no other ſubject; he became leſs at his eaſe in the ſociety of women of faſhion; their preſence not only was a reſtraint on him, but fatiguing, by compelling him to certain little attentions, that he had not yet forgotten were due to the ſex, but from which he would gladly have been exempted.

As the winter advanced, his natural good propenſities took the lead, and he was obſerved to caſt off much of the ruſt contracted during the ſummer; but when *this* returned, he again began to brutify.

Fortunately however, at all times, muſic was pleaſing to him; and Mrs. Raby did all ſhe could to keep a taſte alive, that tends ſo greatly to ſoften the diſpoſition.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE morning that Louiſa by appointment called upon Mrs. Raby, the ſervant told her that his Lady had been obliged to go out upon buſineſs, but that her return was every moment expected; and that ſhe had deſired, if Miſs Roſeville preceded her, that ſhe might be ſhewn into the drawing-room.

Louiſa finding the piano forte open, amuſed herſelf with trying ſome of Mr. Raby's muſic: as ſhe was thus deeply engaged, the door flew open, and a voice cried out, "Oh oh! have I caught you; I knew you were at home, though you were denied to me."

This voice ſtartled Louiſa; ſhe had heard it once before, and her ear recognized with pleaſure, the well known ſound. Inſtantly ſhe aroſe, and no ſooner had ſhe turned round, than Lord Danefield haſtily advanced, with eyes ſparkling with delight, and the ſtrongeſt exclamations of joy and ſurprize.

"I would, Madam," ſaid he, "if I could perſuade myſelf to regret it, apologize for this intruſion, which I was led into, by hearing the ſound of muſic iſſue from this apartment—little did I think what happineſs awaited me!"

Louiſa

Louiſa, pleaſed, yet embaraſſed by the delight he expreſſed, aſked, by way of ſaying ſomething, if he had been long in town.

"Only this moment arrived," anſwered he; "I have been in the country ever ſince I had the honour of ſeeing you laſt. How different, thank God! do you look now, Madam, from what you did then!"

This remark occaſioned ſome grateful acknowledgements on the part of Louiſa, for the very important ſervice Lord Danefield had done her; and finding her friend did not arrive, ſhe aroſe, "Mrs. Raby, my Lord," ſaid ſhe, "is expected every inſtant; you will not probably have long to wait," and ſhe made a motion towards the door.

"I would wait an age," cried he, "could I, Miſs Roſeville, obtain your company; I dare not ſay that length of time, but at leaſt for a few moments."

"It is late, I believe, my Lord, and——"

"And what! let me entreat you to ſtay:"

Louiſa ſat down, pulled off a glove; put it on again, never daring to turn her eyes towards Lord Danefield, who made the moſt of theſe moments, by attentively ſurveying her whole figure; from which agreeable occupation, he was diſturbed by Mrs. Raby's arrival.

As ſhe had been told who were above, ſhe ſhewed no ſurpriſe at the *tête-à-tête* ſhe found; and

after

after the uſual civilities had paſſed between her and her gueſts, ſhe aſked Lord Danefield with an arch ſmile, how he had left Lady Almeria Melvern.

This brought a bluſh upon his cheek; and by a ſympathy unnaccountable to Louiſa, upon her's alſo; while he careleſsly anſwered, that he believed ſhe was well.

"Did not you ſay, my Lord, you were juſt come to town?" ſaid Mrs. Raby.

"Certainly."

"Why then you muſt know pretty poſitively how ſhe does. Pray did ſhe hunt with you?"

"Yes; ſhe hunted. When are we to have the new opera?"

"I have not heard. Is Lady Almeria a bold horſewoman?"

"I don't know—I can't tell—How is——liked; is he thought equal to Pacchierotti?"

"Why you know very well he has not ſung yet; you appear to me, my good Lord, to have left your wits in the country."

Lord Danefield ſighed, but rallying his ſpirits, ſaid laughing, that he never was in greater danger of loſing them, than when with her. The converſation now became general. Mrs. Raby obſerved, ſhe ought to have preſented Miſs Roſeville and

Lord

Lord Danefield to each other, as ſhe believed they had never met before.

" Pardon me, Madam," ſaid Lord Danefield, " this is not the firſt time that I have had the happineſs of ſeeing Miſs Roſeville."

" That's lucky, for I was thinking you had both been as ſtrangers, rather in an aukward ſituation, during my abſence."

Louiſa internally repe ated, " aukward enough! tho' we were not ſtrangers."

And Lord Danefield preſently after took his leave; when he was gone, Louiſa related to her friend, the adventure that had made her acquainted with him; and afterwards enquired with a ſtudied compoſure, who Lady Almeria Melvern was.

" Is it poſſible you ſhould not know?"

" Why, if you recollect that I have been only one month in England, your ſurprize will ceaſe."

" Well, then you are to know Lady Almeria, is Lord Melvern's daughter. She is young, handſome, and deſtined by her father, and the late Lord Danefield, to marry the preſent Viſcount."

" I gueſſed ſomething of the ſort by his countenance," ſaid Louiſa. " Are the young people ſuppoſed to be much attached to each other?"

" What do you infer," replied Mrs. Raby with a ſmile, " from his behaviour this morning? Did

he

he not ſeem in haſte to fly from the ſubject of Lady Almeria?——Indeed I have heard that he ſees her with the greateſt indifference; and it was only to teaze him a little, that I talked of her."

"The intention was kind," returned Louiſa, "but ſurely if he does not like Lady Almeria, he will not be ſo ungenerous as to marry her?"

"Want of inclination, however it may deter him, would to many men, be a trifling obſtacle, if they found their account in other reſpects. Lord Danefield's ſituation is particular; his father had greatly injured his fortune, originally not equal to his rank; by his extravagance he found himſelf plunged into the moſt cruel difficulties; from which he was in a great meaſure extricated by his friend Lord Melvern a very worthy man; but, the chagrin he experienced from the vexatious ſtate of his affairs, however ſevere, ſeemed leſs intolerable, upon reflection, (for he had a very proud ſpirit) than to be under ſuch obligations to Lord Melvern; much as he eſteemed him, he felt himſelf oppreſſed by them; and by brooding continually over his various ſorrows, it was thought he injured his health. From being gay and ſociable, he became ſad, morofe, and ſo averſe to company, that he even declined ſeeing Lord Melvern. But finding his end approach, he ſent for him; and touched by the concern he perceived

perceived on his friend's countenance, he forgot his wonted haughtineſs, and only remembered the generous aſſiſtance he had given him. He now deigned to lament his paſt conduct; declaring however, that the ſhattered fortune he ſhould leave his ſon, gave him much leſs vexation, than that he ſaw no poſſible method of the eſtate's repaying Lord Melvern, for a great number of years. No part of it could be ſold, for it was entailed on the preſent Lord; nor could the ſavings out of it during a ſhort minority, be at all adequate to that purpoſe. Theſe reflections had preyed ſo much upon his mind, that I really believe had his health been reſtored, he would have reduced himſelf to the bare neceſſaries of life, could he have hoped thereby to clear himſelf. But ſo late in general, do we form plans of œconomy, that we live not long enough to reap any benefit from them.

A plan ſuggeſted by Lord Melvern, wonderfully calmed his mind; for though it was a freſh mark of friendſhip, it was not of an oppreſſive nature.

This, was to unite the families by a marriage, between Henry Danefield, and his daughter; and that the money Lord Danefield had received; ſhould be conſidered as her portion: but, if either of the young people objected to this marriage

when they came of age, at which time it was to take place, (there is only a few months difference in their years) then the preſent Lord Danefield ſhould repay Lord Melvern; a certain ſum every year by inſtallments."

"So, then," interrupted Louiſa, "Lord Danefield would be half ruined, were he to decline this match: how much he is to be pitied, and Lady Almeria ſtill more, ſhould the neceſſity of his affairs alone force him into it! ſuch a motive would be unworthy of him."

"'Tis true," replied Mrs. Raby, "but beſides cancelling a very heavy debt, other circumſtances concur to furniſh him with reaſonable motives. Lady Almeria's education has been particularly attended to by an excellent father; her birth, beauty, and accompliſhments too, are ſuch, as to render her a deſirable match for the firſt families in the kingdom.

Lord Danefield's friends, and the world in general, would think it little ſhort of madneſs in him, with ſo many inducements, were he to refuſe her hand, her *willing* hand.

Yet, notwithſtanding the blame he would incur, ſuch is his romantic diſpoſition, that I ſhould not be much ſurprized if the match failed. He is delicate to exceſs, diſintereſted, and likely to conſult his own feelings alone, in ſo important an affair.

affair. Hitherto he has ſhewn no great ſolicitude to be much with Lady Almeria; but he is ſtrongly attached to her father; and to hunt with him, carried him into the country. It is not long ſince he returned from abroad, whither Lord Melvern, who is his guardian, ſent him ſoon after his father's death; and he will be of age in about ten months. His fine perſon, his vivacity, and his charming manners have (as I am told) had the effect that might be expected on Lady Almeria; *ſhe* at leaſt will have no objection to fulfil the engagement their fathers formed."

"Are you," ſaid Louiſa, "well acquainted with her?"

"Not much; ſhe is very reſerved, and we only meet in public; where of late, ſhe ſeldom appears; before Lord Danefield came home, ſhe was a good deal more in the world."

"Does he viſit you often?" aſked Louiſa.

"Oh yes; he calls here frequently; we are connected with the Danefield family; and Melcomb, has known this young man from a boy."

Louiſa now wiſhed her friend a good day; and with a ſlow pace, and penſive air, returned home.

As ſoon as Lady Roſeville ſaw her, ſhe reprimanded her for her long abſence; "There!" cried ſhe, "while you were with your Mrs.

Raby, Lord Pompouſton has been here; impatiently waiting your return, and fretting and fuming. Poor man! I never ſaw any body ſo miſerable."

"I can't ſee why, and I own it amazes me, Madam, that Lord Pompouſton ſhould think it worth his while to wait for me."

"Well, I am glad," ſaid Lady Roſeville, "to ſee you have ſome little humility; certainly, his attentions do you honour."

"I believe, Madam," returned Louiſa, "that we do not quite underſtand each other. I meant only to teſtify my ſurprize, that his Lordſhip, ſeeing (as he cannot fail to do) how very diſagreeable he is to me, ſhould find any gratification in forcing his company upon me."

"You give yourſelf great airs indeed, Miſs Roſeville; forcing his company upon you truly! any other young woman but yourſelf, would be tranſported with joy, to be diſtinguiſhed by Lord Pompouſton. A man of high birth, immenſe fortune, and one of the fineſt figures in the world; what in the name of God, can you wiſh for more?"

"Many things that he does not poſſeſs, and without which the advantages you mention have, (and were they ſtill more conſiderable, would have) no attractions for me. I am ſorry, Madam," continued ſhe, "ſince you think well of him, to

ſpeak

of him ſlightingly; but I cannot retract the opinion I have already given."

"Will you be pleaſed," cried Lady Roſeville with a ſneer, "to mention the mighty defects that with your wonderful ſagacity you have perceived in him."

"Indeed, Madam, I wiſh to be excuſed."

"No no, Miſs Roſeville, I inſiſt upon knowing; ſpeak, when I command you."

"Then, Madam, I muſt ſay, I am diſguſted with Lord Pompouſton's conceit and arrogance; his ſurfeiting details of himſelf; his want of veracity; the impertinent freedom of his manners; and I am much inclined to think by the turn of his converſation, that his principles would be as intolerable to me as the reſt."

This ſpeech irritated Lady Roſeville extremely. In her paſſion ſhe made uſe of language, ſuch as Louiſa had never before heard; and even threatened to confine her to her chamber, if ſhe did not behave with particular civility to Lord Pompouſton, whom ſhe ſaid ſhe expected in the evening.

Poor Louiſa, ſhocked at her mother's violence, retired in tears to her apartment; where ſhe paſſed ſome hours in very unpleaſant meditations, totally forgetting that ſhe was ſtill in her morning dreſs, 'till the bell ſummoned her to dinner; and had ſhe not been apprehenſive of diſpleaſing Lady

Roſeville ſtill further, ſhe would have diſpenſed herſelf from attending it.

To her no ſmall relief ſhe found that ſhe ſhould not be alone with her mother, as Sir Ralph Random was already ſeated at the table; and as ſhe imagined by the ſignificant glances interchanged between them, had been liſtening to Lady Roſeville's complaints againſt her.

As ſoon as dinner was over, and the ſervants retired, Lady Roſeville deſcanted, if not in elegant, at leaſt in energetic language, on the perverſeneſs of youth, and on the folly of young peoples' ſuppoſing they could be competent judges of the characters of any one, or, of the mode of conduct they themſelves ought to adopt.

Sir Ralph, who loved an argument, and who could ſeldom reſiſt contradicting, even his beſt friends, when he was in a diſputing mood, obſerved, that ſince penetration (according to Lady Roſeville's notion) encreaſed with years, his ſhare muſt be allowed to be ſuperior to her's; and that he never ſuffered his judgment to be biaſſed by inclination, which, added he, "I muſt ſay, Madam, is not always your caſe. Your friend, Lady Bridget, is not exempt from great failings, nor her niece from inſignificance. As for Lord Pompouſton, he is certainly a man of faſhion, and has

a fine

a fine fortune; but I could wiſh he were leſs addicted to boaſting."

"This is mighty pretty of you," cried Lady Roſeville, warmly, "to abuſe my friends, and encourage my daughter in her unwarrantable prejudices. Juſt now you held a very different language."

Sir Ralph denied her aſſertion; and a diſpute began, which Lady Roſeville finding herſelf unequal to, interrupted, by tartly aſking Louiſa, (who had hitherto been ſilent, and not a little amazed at Sir Ralph's conduct, being unacquainted with his diſpoſition) whether ſhe intended to continue that figure all the evening.

Louiſa anſwered, that ſhe was ſenſible an apology was requiſite for her negligent dreſs, and that ſhe would go and alter it immediately. As ſhe retired, Sir Ralph, by a look, ſeemed to claim ſome merit with her, for having thwarted her mother's ſentiments; but ſhe felt little diſpoſed to gratitude; his pertinacity in defending *his*, having diſcovered to her the real motives that had actuated him.

Louiſa was not a little glad to eſcape to her own apartment, where Marianne delivered to her a note from Mr. Bangrove, which had, by his deſire, been entruſted to her, to give to her Lady in private. In it, he earneſtly requeſted her, either to al-

low him the honour of waiting on her, the firſt morning that ſhe could depend upon Lady Roſeville's abſence, and could be certain of an opportunity of ſeeing him alone; or elſe to do him the diſtinguiſhed favour of calling at his chambers, where he often received ladies of great quality.

Louiſa was puzzled how to act; there was ſomething myſterious in Bangrove's language and manners, which ſuited ill with the openneſs of her diſpoſition; ſhe had no great inclination to give him a ſecret meeting, yet perhaps it might be wrong to neglect hearing what he had to ſay—and at laſt ſhe determined to call upon him the next morning, accompanied by Mrs. Raby, if ſhe would conſent to go with her. Having with pen and paper adjuſted theſe matters, and charged Marianne to ſend her anſwer to Bangrove by a chairman, and to deliver the other note herſelf, ſhe diſpatched the buſineſs of the toilette, and repaired to the drawing room, where ſhe found the uſual party already arrived, and ſome other perſons.

Lord Pompouſton ſcarcely noticed her entrance; he was engaged in ſome ſtrong aſſertion, which he was enforcing with more than ordinary geſticulation, and certain expletives, that he never failed introducing into all converſation.

Sir Ralph was attending to him with a ſatirical grin

grin upon his countenance, apparently watching for a moment to fling in his diſſent.

The reſt of the company were engaged in a general converſation, all but Miſs Benſley, who ſat with a vacant eye, ſeemingly thinking of nothing.

Louiſa ſeated herſelf by her, and in her uſual obliging manner, enquired after her health, and chatted upon different ſubjects; but ſhe found Miſs Benſley ſhort in her anſwers, and not inclined to ſpeak. Louiſa had never obſerved her in this humour before; and though it did not mortify her very much, ſhe wiſhed to account for it. "Are you ill, Miſs Benſley?" ſaid ſhe, "or have I had the misfortune to offend you?"

"La! no—What makes you aſk?"

"Becauſe you are ſo unuſually ſilent."

"I have good reaſon to be ſo," replied Miſs Benſley; "for I have been ſo vexed you can't think. Lord Pompouſton has been ſo rude to me this morning, you never heard any thing like it; and I am ſure I don't know what I did to offend him—but he thought proper to ſay I was a little painted puppet, a milliner's doll; and not content with this abuſe, he ridiculed thoſe accompliſhments, which all the world allows me to poſſeſs—Said he had as leave hear a cat run over the harpſichord, as hear me play.—Was not this ſhocking uſage?"

"Bad enough," anſwered Louiſa, "and not a little extraordinary from a man who pretends to be polite and well bred."

"Yet it muſt be allowed he is both," ſaid Miſs Benſley; and I aſſure you he is quite a man of the *ton*."

"I have never yet been able rightly to comprehend," ſaid Louiſa, "what qualities entitle a perſon to belong to this claſs; but I muſt own I imagined they were at leaſt ſuch, as Lord Pompouſton does not poſſeſs."

"O you are much miſtaken," ſaid Miſs Benſley; but can't you gueſs what put my couſin into this ill-humour?"

"No indeed."

"Well then I can aſſure you, you were the cauſe. He was diſappointed at not finding you at home, and ſo he vented his anger upon me. You are very fortunate, Miſs Roſeville, in being the object of his admiration, for he is difficult to pleaſe; but his partiality makes him commend all you do, and ſay."

"I do aſſure you," replied Louiſa with a faint ſmile, "I am not in the leaſt flattered, by being thus diſtinguiſhed by his Lordſhip."

"Oh! as for that, I never can believe it," exclaimed Miſs Benſley;" my couſin may throw his handkerchief where ever he pleaſes; there is no woman

woman that would not fly with tranſport to pick it up."

"Believe me you are ſtrangely deceived;" ſaid Louiſa, well convinced that were ſuch a *prize* in view, Miſs Benſley would not be the laſt to ſecure it; "there are many women whom nothing could tempt to marry him."

"I am amazed to hear you ſay ſo," ſaid Miſs Benſley; "for if Lord Pompouſton had fewer advantages, what young woman would refuſe an eligible eſtabliſhment? It is ſuch a delightful thing to have a houſe and ſervants of one's own! To be no longer plagued with maſters and governeſſes! To fly about where one likes, free from all reſtraint, and to enjoy all the privileges of a married woman!

If it was not for this proſpect, do you think I would paſs my life in the manner I do, fagging all day long with maſters? No, no; when once I am married, I poſitively will do nothing at all, but dreſs and divert myſelf.

"A very laudable reſolution," cried Louiſa, laughing; "but if your huſband ſhould be ſo unfaſhionable as to wiſh you to ſpend your time in a more ſerious manner, or ſo unreaſonable as to expect you to attend to the management of his family, what will you do then?"

"O I ſhall trouble myſelf little about his

wiſhes, or expectations, if he forms any that are abſurd; for after all, it is more natural to ſtudy one's own, than the pleaſures of others."

Juſt as Louiſa was going to anſwer, ſhe felt ſome body touching her hair behind, and haſtily turning, perceived Lord Pompouſton, who had, unobſerved by her, glided along the room, and placed himſelf behind her chair, where he amuſed himſelf with twirling round his fingers her beautiful ringlets.

She immediately aroſe, with no very benign aſpect; but he pretended not to remark it; and placing himſelf ſo, that without deranging two or three people, ſhe could not get from him, he began to lament the mortification he had endured in the morning, having waited no leſs than three hours to ſee her, though he ought at that time to have been with ſome of the miniſtry, with whom he had buſineſs of conſequence to tranſact, which he had neglected upon her account.

Louiſa gravely replied, that it was a pity he had done ſo; and hoped for the future, he never would put himſelf to any inconvenience to ſee her.

"There now," cried he, "always cold and indifferent! I thought what amends I ſhould receive from you for my diſappointment; and faith, I had determined this evening to imitate your example, and be, like you, indifferent. Your eyes, haughtily

haughtily averted from me, as you entered the room, encouraged me in this reſolution; but when I ſaw your graceful figure move, I began to feel it ſtagger, and ſome moments paſt, I loſt my indifference totally amidſt thoſe charming ringlets."

The loud tone with which theſe words were uttered reached every ear, and the eyes of the aſſembly were directed to Louiſa, who, exceſſively diſconcerted, ſaid in a low voice, as ſhe ineffectually attempted to get out of the corner in which ſhe was confined, "Theſe affected raptures are extremely diſguſting—I muſt deſire, Lord Pompouſton, you would reſtrain them, and not draw upon me, the attention of the company."

"What have they better to do, than to gaze upon you? Does not all your ſex wiſh to engage attention? And however angelic your form is, Miſs Roſeville, that lovely boſom, I truſt, contains the ſame paſſions, that find place in thoſe of coarſer mould."

Louiſa, much provoked, had recourſe to ſilence. Her perſecutor continued, "Believe me, Madam, I am perfectly acquainted with the diſpoſition of women; I have ſeen and ſtudied them, in all countries, and never yet found one, that was inſenſible to admiration—Fanny is more honeſt than you; ſhe would not, I am ſure, deny how much it

it delights her; but, poor thing, ſhe gets it in very ſparing doſes."

"Becauſe you are unjuſt," cried Miſs Benſley angrily, "that's no reaſon other people ſhould be ſo."

And the breaking up of a card table at that moment, gave Louiſa an opportunity to eſcape; but Lord Pompouſton followed her. "Do you ſuppoſe," cried he, laughing, "thus to get from me? Be perſuaded, I would follow you to the world's end, ſuch is my enthuſiaſtic admiration for you; and you yourſelf (notwithſtanding thoſe frowns) would be diſappointed, if I acted otherwiſe."

"Diſappointed!" exclaimed Louiſa, diſdainfully.

"Yes, diſappointed—perſeverance conquers all obſtacles; and a day will come, when you will no longer repreſent—for young ladies always diſſemble their real ſentiments, while they are ſingle; but you will, I hope, in time, lay aſide this reſerve, and treat me as I merit."

"Yes," cried Louiſa, "I will lay aſide all reſerve. Your conduct, Lord Pompouſton, obliges me to avow, that your preſence and converſation never can be otherwiſe, than highly diſagreeable to me."

And thus ſaying, ſhe ſprang towards the door, and was on the point of vaniſhing, when Lady Roſe-

Roſeville, who had attentively obſerved this ſcene, hurried after her, and compelled her to return.

To add to her vexation, ſhe perceived Lord Pompouſton ſmiling at her ſignificantly, and preparing to renew his attacks:—her only reſource againſt theſe, was to get into a circle of grave people, whoſe preſence might ſomewhat awe him.

But here again ſhe was diſappointed—no circumſtance could daunt him; he never ſcrupled to ſay what he choſe, nor to *perſifflé* the moſt reſpectable characters. He had but one ſtyle of language; this was either fulſome compliments, when he had any object to gain, or ſarcaſtic remarks, or elſe rodomontades about his caſtle in Ireland, or of his exploits on the continent.

Not that he was incapable of holding a rational diſcourſe, had not his intellects been obſcured by pride and vanity; but he had been ſpoiled by the exceſſive indulgence of his family, and by becoming, at a very early age, at liberty to diſpoſe as he pleaſed of a large eſtate, which he had conſidered as boundleſs; fondly believing to find in wealth alone, not only every luxury his imagination could paint, but every reſpect and diſtinction, due to claims more eſtimable.

Louiſa therefore found herſelf ſtill expoſed to his perſecutions, which he would not have remitted the whole evening, had not Sir Ralph

Random

Random provoked him into an argument, in which, finding he could not brow-beat his adverſary, he departed in a huff, to the no ſmall ſatisfaction of Louiſa.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning Louiſa called upon Mrs. Raby, who had conſented to accompany her to Bangrove's, and they went together to his chambers in Lincoln's-Inn. He received them with many bows and compliments, and deſired Mrs. Raby would not be offended, if he conducted her friend into an adjoining room, as what he had to communicate, was deſigned for her private ear.

As ſoon as he had ſeated Louiſa, and placed himſelf oppoſite to her, he ſaid, "he was particularly glad ſhe had choſen his apartment for the place of meeting, as he was well convinced the doors at Lady Roſeville's, had ears; this was apparent, from her Ladyſhip's behaviour to him ſince their laſt conference. Now, pray Madam," continued he, "let me aſk you, if you have perceived (for I know you are a young lady of great penetration) if you have perceived nothing particular, in regard to Sir Ralph Random?"

Louiſa bluſhed; ſhe had ſome vague ideas reſpecting him, which ſhe by no means choſe to avow.

"You are ſilent, Madam—I ſee you underſtand me, and admire your diſcretion:—If ſome folks, who ſhall be nameleſs, poſſeſſed as much, it

it would be better for them.—Why, Lord help her,—all the world muſt ſee it; the ſun at noon day, is not clearer; and yet ſhe thinks to impoſe upon people! Well, Sir Edward had doubtleſs his reaſon for diſtruſting her—what would he ſay, could he but ſee her fine houſe in Portman-ſquare! and how is that, and the reſt of her fine things to be paid for? But people gallop on, without conſidering what they will find at the end of their courſe; now, in my opinion, every perſon ſhould ſee a fair proſpect before them, or draw in till they do; and what proſpect can be fair, that is clouded with debts? I know as well as any man, how far money will go, and that with her Ladyſhip's means, it is impoſſible her trades-people ſhould ever get a farthing in the pound, unleſs ſhe ſqueezes ſomething out of Sir Ralph."

"But what is all this to me, Sir?" ſaid Louiſa, who had liſtened impatiently to his harangue, "I thought you had ſomething material to communicate concerning myſelf, otherwiſe I ſhould not have come here."

"I crave your pardon, Madam; what I have been ſaying, is of more conſequence than you imagine: I foreſee, from the derangement of Lady Roſeville's affairs, many evils that will fall upon you—it is neceſſary therefore, that you ſhould be warned to avoid them; and with your permiſſion,

I will

I will chalk out the plan you ought to purſue. Firſt then, it highly behoves you to watch the conduct of that crafty fellow, who has inſinuated himſelf into your mother's favour; his influence over her encreaſes daily; and I plainly perceive the drift of them both, is to marry you to the bragging Iriſh Lord, whoſe affairs are very far from being in the flouriſhing condition he would fain make us believe. He, and his thouſand tenants! Aſk who receives their rents? that's all—and ſee how fooliſh he would look—name but the word annuity before him, and he will turn as pale as death. He little thought, when he was running on ſo glibly in my hearing, that I knew how deeply he was plunged.

Secondly, Have no confidence, Miſs Roſeville, in any of the ſet, for they are all linked together.

And thirdly, If your grandmother, Lady Roſeville, left any ſum of money in your own hands, independent of your guardian, depoſit it in mine, and I will faithfully account to you for it, otherwiſe it will ſoon get into ſome folk's clutches, and be totally loſt to you."

Louiſa could not help feeling there was much truth in Bangrove's diſcourſe; yet, unwilling to authorize a man, almoſt a ſtranger to her, to ſpeak with ſuch freedom of her mother, ſhe ſaid, that as ſhe was willing to believe he had only her intereſt

intereſt in view, ſhe thanked him for the hints he had given her, but that ſhe wiſhed he would be more circumſpect, in ſpeaking of her mother, "who," added ſhe, "may have reaſons, for not yet avowing her intentions in regard to Sir Ralph Random; but in the mean while, excuſe me, Sir, if I ſay, it is neither becoming in *you* to make comments on her actions, nor in *me* to liſten to them."

"Oh Lord! Madam! her intentions are pretty well known, and I am not ſingular in the comments I make upon her actions,—what, do you then ſuppoſe ſhe means to marry Sir Ralph?"

"It is not at all improbable," anſwered Louiſa.

"O dear! ſhe has no ſuch thoughts; ſhe loves her liberty too well; and he knows too much of her character, to think of her and matrimony together—you quite miſtake the thing—their connection—but your innocence prevents your ſeeing it, in its proper light."

"I hope," ſaid Louiſa, "that it is *you* who are miſtaken—I truſt you are not warranted in entertaining this unfavourable opinion of my mother. But it is a ſubject, Mr. Bangrove, that I muſt deſire you will never mention to me again; I wiſh you had forborne it at preſent."

"Well

" Well, well, Madam, I'll drop it, though I meant no harm."

And then offering himſelf again to be her banker, he ſuffered her to join her friend, and attended the ladies to their carriage.

Juſt as he had withdrawn, and that Mrs. Raby was giving ſome directions to her ſervant, about a ſhop which ſhe wiſhed to ſtop at, in her way home, Louiſa was ſtruck with the ſight of the gentleman whom ſhe had relieved, when he had fallen into a fit in the field. This very perſon paſſed by the carriage; obſerved, and ſlightly bowed to her; then aſcended the ſtairs of the houſe ſhe had juſt left—ſhe wiſhed to know whether it was to Bangrove he went; but as other perſons had chambers in the ſame houſe, it was impoſſible to gueſs.

This man's conduct appeared to her ſingular; he had not attempted to ſpeak to her, though ſome civility ſeemed due to her, in return for her kind attention to him during his illneſs; when he had paid her the greateſt reſpect, and ſaid a thouſand flattering things, till he heard her name; ſhe had not forgotten his ſtrange exclamation at that moment, and ſhe now regretted that Mrs Raby, who might know, had not ſeen him; having the greateſt curioſity to diſcover who he was.

Mrs. Raby, to whom ſhe related this anecdote, was amazed at the ſtranger's myſterious behaviour;

and

and ſhe warmly cenſured his incivility, not to call it by a harſher name.

Cautious as Louiſa had been in her conference with Bangrove, of confirming the bad opinion he entertained of her mother, ſhe could not in her heart doubt his having but too much cauſe for it. Her own obſervations had infuſed ſome ſuſpicions in her breaſt, that ſhe had endeavoured to diſmiſs, but which Bangrove's hints helped to corroborate. She knew that Sir Ralph was perpetually in Portman-ſquare, where he ſeemed eſtabliſhed with as much eaſe, as if he had been maſter of the houſe: yet his behaviour was neither marked with reſpect or tenderneſs; his viſits ſeemed to him a matter of indifference; he entered the drawing-room without ceremony, lounged away his time in a great chair by the fire ſide, till Lady Roſeville's numerous engagements, or his own, occaſioned his departure. His manner was authoritative; he ſeemed more diſpoſed to find fault and to diſpute, than to commend or flatter.

But much as Lady Roſeville at times reſented the provocations he gave her, in general ſhe crouched to him; his influence with her ſeemed unbounded; his opinion in moſt caſes regulated her conduct; and ſhe humoured all his whims and caprices.

If he delayed coming exactly at the expected time, a note was diſpatched to him; whatever occurred

occurred in the courſe of the day, was communicated to him, and when he was abſent, all her leiſure moments were employed at her *ſecretaire*.

Louiſa, pained by theſe reflections, determined to be more than ever reſerved in her behaviour to Sir Ralph; to place no confidence in any of thoſe perſons whom ſhe could not eſteem; and to mark by her conduct, her total diſapprobation of Lord Pompouſton's views.

Young as ſhe was, ſhe found herſelf ſo ſituated, as to render it neceſſary that ſhe ſhould redouble her vigilance, to preſerve her character unſullied: ſince an inadvertence in her, which would indulgently be paſſed over in another, might be conſidered as a proof, that the effects of evil communication had already reached her.

Mrs. Raby had not long left Louiſa, after ſhe had ſet her down in Portman-ſquare, before her ſervant returned with a note, which informed her, ſhe had juſt heard that ſhe might have two places in a friend's box at Drury-lane, that night to ſee Mrs. Siddons, and that ſhe hoped to have the pleaſure of Miſs Roſeville's company.

Louiſa was delighted with the invitation, and having obtained her mother's permiſſion to accept it, and to dine with Mrs. Raby, who promiſed to carry her to the theatre, ſhe ſet about her dreſs with alacrity. She haſtened to Hill-ſtreet with

elevated

elevated ſpirits, not only from the pleaſure ſhe propoſed to herſelf, in ſeeing ſo famous an actreſs, but becauſe ſhe imagined there was no great chance of its being allayed by Lord Pompouſton's preſence, who had often, in her hearing, expreſſed his diſlike of Engliſh Tragedies, which were, as he ſaid, full of incongruities, and of horrors, too ſhocking to be repreſented before a civilized people.

The play was Iſabella; and Louiſa gave up her whole ſoul to it; but a great noiſe of letting down of benches, and of tongues complimenting about places, occaſioned by the arrival of ſome fine people in a box very near that ſhe occupied, diſagreeably ſuſpended her attention. By a ſort of involuntary motion, both ſhe and Mrs. Raby turned their eyes towards this box, when the latter whiſpered her, that the tall lady, with a profuſion of feathers, was Lady Almeria Melvern.

However intereſted Louiſa had been in the fate of Iſabella, ſhe felt at that moment, that Lady Almeria intereſted her ſtill more—ſhe wiſhed to penetrate into the diſpoſition of *her*, who was deſtined to marry the moſt accompliſhed young man ſhe had yet ſeen. Lady Almeria's countenance, did not, in her opinion, expreſs either a brilliant underſtanding, or any of thoſe mild virtues that engage partiality; nor did her perſon,

critically

critically ſurveyed by Louiſa, ſeem as handſome as repreſented—ſhe thought her figure too thin, too tall, too ſcraggy; and her complexion, which appeared like ſnow by candle light, ſhe ſuſpected to be in fact very yellow; her eyes alone, ſhe acknowledged to be fine.

This examination had rendered her inattentive to what was paſſing on the ſtage, and ſhe felt diſpleaſed with herſelf for having undertaken it; yet, by an irreſiſtible attraction, her head involuntarily turned towards this fatal box, eſpecially if ſhe heard the opening of a door—fatal it ſeemed to her, becauſe ever ſince it filled, her ideas had been entirely deranged.

At laſt Mrs. Siddons's wonderful talents fixed her attention; ſhe could no longer be abſent;—Iſabella's woes ſo pathetically repreſented, chaſed from her every excurſive thought.

But during the pauſe between the ſecond and third act, ſhe remarked to Mrs. Raby, that as Lord Danefield lived in Lord Melvern's family, it was ſomewhat ſingular, that he was not of Lady Almeria's party that evening.

The voice of that lady now reached her ear, and ſhe heard her ſay, "you are very right,—indeed I did wrong to expoſe myſelf to this trial—my nerves will be ſhattered to pieces—is it not a ſad thing to be thus delicately organized?"

Louiſa loſt her companion's reply, but ſhe heard Lady Almeria ſay, " Oh! no, I ſhall ſcarcely be out of my bed all to-morrow; and the day following I am to do penance at Mrs. Melvern's, where I expect the noiſe of her children will diſtract my head."

Louiſa heard no more, but ſhe could not help aſking Mrs. Raby, whether Lady Almeria had not very bad health.

" Not to my knowledge; but ſhe thinks it fine to appear delicate."

" What do you mean by fine?"

" O, when I have leiſure, I will explain it to you; but for the preſent, be ſatisfied with hearing, that it is to be in every reſpect, exactly oppoſite to the vulgar."

The play now proceeded; many of the ſcenes ſenſibly affected Louiſa; her tears flowed, and ſhe endeavoured to conceal them, for being void of affectation, her grief was exempt from parade.

Not ſo Lady Almeria's;—ſhe went into a real, or a feigned hyſteric: the confuſion this occaſioned in her box, interrupted the attention of the audience; the actors ſcarcely could be heard, and a general murmur enſued; yet, upon recovering, ſhe could not be prevailed upon to quit the houſe. After the piece concluded, Lord Danefield made his appearance in her box, but his eye catching a glimpſe

glimpſe of Louiſa; after a ſhort ſtay with Lady Almeria, he left her, and came into Mrs. Raby's, which was now nearly empty, moſt of thoſe who had filled it, not caring to ſee the farce.

Louiſa felt herſelf in an agitation, the cauſe of which ſhe did not dare to examine;—ſhe hardly allowed herſelf to ſpeak to Lord Danefield, but he ſpoke, and that was ſufficient; his ſoftened accents, when he addreſſed her, once made her turn her head—her eyes met his;—and that ſingle glance, which did not laſt half a ſecond, conveyed to her mind more than he could have uttered, or ſhe would have allowed herſelf to hear.

"Pray, Lord Danefield," ſaid Mrs. Raby, "how came you to be ſo late? Only think of preferring a ſtupid farce, to ſuch a play!"

"You wrong me very much," anſwered he; "I have been here the whole evening; but as I knew, I ſhould neither ſee nor hear in the box to which I belonged, I made intereſt with a friend, who got me a ſnug ſeat in the orcheſtra. If all the ladies would follow yours, and Miſs Roſeville's example, in attending ſolely to the buſineſs of the ſtage, and in coming without caps, we men, ſhould have infinitely more ſatisfaction at a play."

"Ah!" thought Louiſa, "more credit is given to me for attention, than I merit!"

At that inſtant the box door opened, and Lord

Pompouſton appeared—Louiſa coloured with vexation, while he made bitter lamentations at his ill luck, in finding the houſe ſo full, that he had been unable to get near her before; and then turning to his neighbour, "Pray, Danefield, where were you? I did not ſee you in Lady Almeria's box."

Lord Danefield made a very ſlight reply; but Lord Pompouſton, with the eaſe of an intimate acquaintance, continued to addreſs himſelf to him, which perſeverance ſeemed to haſten Lord Danefield's return to his party. With Mrs. Raby alone, he got ſome confabulation; for Louiſa, from a different cauſe, was as ſilent to him, as ſhe had been to Lord Danefield.

He had ſcarcely left them, when Lord Pompouſton ſaid, "Danefield will have a bleſſed wife! I never ſaw ſuch a piece of affectation, as that Lady Almeria Melvern; I could hear her bellow acroſs the houſe."—"It was a very affecting tragedy, and her nerves, I ſuppoſe, are weak," ſaid Mrs. Raby.

"Curſed affectation! that's all; her feelings are far from acute—her father has ſhocking fits of a dreadful malady; and I never heard that his real agonies afflicted her thus—but all the fine ladies, now-a-days, are exquiſitely ſenſible to imaginary woes—the Lord preſerve me from an affected wife!"

Then

Then bending down, and looking full in Louiſa's face, "Pray, Miſs Roſeville," ſaid he, "what do you think of Danefield?"

"Of Lord Danefield!" ſtammered ſhe, "indeed I know him very little;" and ſhe haſtily addreſſed ſomething to Mrs. Raby, to prevent his having an opportunity of diſtreſſing her further. But upon his repeating the queſtion, Mrs. Raby aroſe, and obſerved, that the houſe began to thin very faſt. "My ſervant, I believe," ſaid ſhe, "has forgot me."

Louiſa rejoiced that Lord Pompouſton did not offer to ſee for the carriage; ſhe hated to owe him the moſt trifling obligation; yet ſhe could not but wonder at his exceſſive rudeneſs, in ſuffering Mrs. Raby to go herſelf, to enquire for her ſervant.

It was a rule with him, never to give himſelf the leaſt trouble on theſe occaſions; his aunt was the only woman he ever condeſcended to aſſiſt out of any place.

With much compoſure he ſtood by the ladies, reviewing the figures that paſſed; but preſently after (when one of Mrs. Raby's acquaintance, who, having accidentally paſſed by in the lobby, and hearing her aſk for her ſervant, had taken ſome trouble to find him, and to get her carriage up) upon its being announced, Lord Pompouſton ſtepped forward, and ſeizing Louiſa's hand, (which

ſhe could not keep from him) conducted her down the ſtairs, preſſing her fingers unmercifully all the way.

The ſtairs were ſtill crowded: they were forced to ſtop on the landing place, which gave Lord Pompouſton an opportunity of whiſpering in her ear, that ſhe looked like an angel. A general move ſtopped his compliments; but her vexation was not leſſened, when ſhe perceived Lord Danefield cloſe by, who ſhrank back to give her room, and whoſe looks ſufficiently denoted, he had ſeen all that had juſt paſſed. This cauſed her to make a freſh effort to diſengage her hand, but to no purpoſe; and no obſtacle interpoſing, Lord Pompouſton, with a ſort of triumphant nod at Lord Danefield, led her to the carriage, and ſhe returned home, impreſſed with a variety of ſenſations, very different from thoſe ſhe had felt during the repreſentation of Iſabella; indeed the play was what ſhe the leaſt remembered of that evening.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

LOUISA, now for about ten days or a fortnight, enjoyed ſome quiet, owing to Lord Pompouſton's being engaged upon a Committee of the Houſe of Commons, ſo that he could only obtrude his company upon her of an evening, and then ſometimes ſhe eſcaped to Mrs. Raby's, where he was no longer invited.

Mrs. Raby, for her ſake, lived much at home; and theſe amiable friends, paſſed their time ſo agreeably with their books, their muſic, and their work, that it was with reluctance they entered into gayer ſcenes, or ſuffered their tête-à-têtes to be interrupted.

Louiſa often met Lord Danefield in her morning viſits to Mrs. Raby, but theſe meetings were quite accidental; and though he did not particularly notice her, and rather affected to addreſs his converſation chiefly to her friend, his eyes, leſs guarded than his words, ſeemed perpetually employed in conſulting hers.

No perſon's converſation could be more charming than Lord Danefield's; it was extremely lively, yet with ſuch a perfect attention to delicacy, that no light word, or unguarded expreſſion, ever eſcaped his lips. His memory furniſhed him with

a thouſand agreeable anecdotes; but his ſtories were always ſhort, and told in the happieſt manner. Very different from Lord Pompouſton, he never made himſelf the ſubject of diſcourſe; and though he had acquired much information, and profited by his travels, more than is common to very young men, his modeſty forbade any pompous diſplay of his attainments. His language and manners were ſuch, as could only reſult from a mind truly elegant. His temper ſeemed very amiable, though perhaps a little too warm;—generous almoſt to a fault, ſomewhat too proud; exempt from all perſonal vanity, but full of the noble ambition of a high-born young man, who valued himſelf on being deſcended from a race of gallant anceſtors, and wiſhed to prove that their virtues had not degenerated in him; and if he could not like them, by his proweſs, add to the illuſtration of his family, his heart ſecretly aſſured him, that he ſhould never degrade *that*, or himſelf, by a mean unworthy action.

Louiſa had too much taſte and ſenſibility not to be charmed with a young man thus formed to pleaſe; and to curb her growing partiality, ſhe was forced frequently to remind herſelf, of his engagements with Lady Almeria Melvern.

Though Lady Roſeville ſometimes murmured at her daughter's frequent viſits to Mrs. Raby, her preſent

preſent plan ſeemed that of indulgence; this gave Louiſa hopes that ſhe had made ſome progreſs in her affections: no pecuniary demands had yet been made, and ſhe not only acquitted her parent of the ſordid views imputed to her by Bangrove, but thought with indignation at the injuſtice he had done her.

Her chief diſquiet now aroſe from Sir Ralph Random's perſevering aſſiduities in Portman-ſquare; again the idea of an intended marriage occurred, and was rejected; owing to the ambiguous conduct of the parties. But it was a point ſo delicate, as to preclude any attempt at an eclairciſſement.

Lady Roſeville's houſe being now completed, ſhe reſolved to give a ball; and as Lady Daſhaway, (her friend) was in the habit of giving entertainments, ſhe was entruſted with the management of this buſineſs, and empowered to invite all the ſmart young men of her acquaintance, which was more extenſive than that of Lady Roſeville: and as the latter was no longer cramped for room, ſhe determined on this occaſion to have a Faro table.

All this was ſettled one morning in a long conference between theſe ladies; and the day fixed, for the firſt Wedneſday after Eaſter. This ſcheme was communicated to Louiſa the ſame day.

Lady Roſeville choſe to ſtay at home in the

evening, and Louiſa, who was engaged to Mrs. Raby, left her mother in high ſpirits, and particular good humour; meditating what ſort of flowers would look the gayeſt by candle light for the feſtoons, to which ſhe intended to ſuſpend the lamps.

But on her return from Hill-ſtreet, ſhe was ſtruck as ſhe aſcended the ſtairs with a loud clamour of voices in the drawing room; and ſhe diſtinguiſhed theſe words, "I tell you, I will not do it! by Heaven I will not!"

This ſtrong vociferation ſhe found, came from Sir Ralph Random; and now a voice equally angry, but much ſhriller, exclaimed, "I wonder you are not aſhamed to refuſe me ſuch a trifle. Is it thus you treat me, ungrateful monſter as you are, after all the ſacrifices I have made you!"

"Softly, not ſo faſt," cried Sir Ralph; ſince you talk of ſacrifices, permit me to aſk the motive of them?—Speak to that if you can."

"What other could I have, and you know it to be true, but my regard for you."

"That's not perfectly clear to me; I have never perceived that you conſidered aught, but your own gratification. Yet, you are eſſentially obliged to me. Who ſaved you from the King's-bench, ha? but thither you may go for me, for I ſhall give myſelf no further trouble about you. At your age, to think of nothing but folly and vanity, quite diſguſts me!"

This

This laſt expreſſion ſeemed to irritate Lady Roſeville, more than all that had preceded it; ſhe rang the bell violently, and Louiſa, who had ſtood almoſt petrified on the landing place; hurried down into the parlour, that ſhe might not meet Sir Ralph, who, at the ſtair head was enquiring for his ſervant. Preſently after, ſhe heard his carriage drive from the door.

She forbore going near her mother, thinking it improper in the diſordered ſtate, in which ſhe ſuppoſed her; and ſhe herſelf was exceſſively diſcompoſed at the ſtrange language ſhe had heard. Some of Bangrove's ſuſpicions were then but too well founded!

An immediate ſummons to attend her mother, interrupted her unpleaſant reflections.

It is the effect of paſſion totally to deſtroy cunning. Lady Roſeville was too much occupied by her reſentment, to think of concealing it; and ſhe forgot that mildneſs, ſhe had of late aſſumed. Louiſa found her pacing the room with haſty ſteps, and cheeks yet crimſoned with paſſion. "What's the reaſon," cried ſhe, "that you did not come to me as ſoon as you came home?"

"I heard, Madam, you were not alone, and—"

"And what?—But you are always glad of an excuſe to avoid being with me."

"Indeed———"

" None of your *indeeds*——I have no friend on earth who cares for me."

" Say not ſo, dear Madam."

" I have but too much reaſon to think ſo. There's Sir Ralph Random; I really thought him my friend, but he has uſed me abominably."

She pauſed; and Louiſa felt no inclination to enter upon this chapter; but Lady Roſeville, preſſed by a deſire of venting her griefs, continued.

——" Money is ſuch a trifling conſideration between friends, that I made no ſcruple to requeſt Sir Ralph to lend me a hundred pounds. Could I ſuppoſe it poſſible, after our long intimacy, that he ſhould refuſe me ſo ſmall a ſum? I am ſure Louiſa, you muſt think him much to blame."

" Since he has treated you unbecomingly," ſaid Louiſa, " if I might take the liberty to adviſe, I would, in your place, break off all acquaintance with him. And however mortifying it is to have applied to ſuch a man, it is the leſs to be regretted, if it proves the means of developing to you his unworthineſs."

" Well, cried Lady Roſeville, who did not much reliſh Louiſa's frankneſs," we will talk no more about him; and now let us ſee whether *you* will be diſpoſed to aſſiſt me. You muſt be ſenſible that I have been at a very great expence in fitting up this houſe, which you know I ſhould not

not have hired, but upon your account. God knows, for myſelf, I never ſhould have thought of one ſo large; nor ſhould I live in the ſtyle I do, but for your advantage. The pitiful allowance Chancery makes me, is very inadequate to the additional expences you occaſion me; therefore my dear child, as I imagine you have a good handſome ſum of money by you, your grandmother having been always very laviſh to you, I muſt deſire you will produce it; it cannot be better diſpoſed of than in aſſiſting your mother, and your own gratification is concerned; for without a recruit of money, I ſhall not be able to give the ball, which is deſtined for your amuſement; and to give you a certain *eclat* in the world."

"So!" thought Louiſa; "every moment brings a freſh proof of Bangrove's diſcernment!"

"I am ſorry, Madam," ſaid ſhe in reply, "that it is not in my power to be of much uſe to you. I can only accommodate you with fifty pounds; but your Ladyſhip is welcome to ſtop my half year's allowance. I am concerned that I have occaſioned you any inconvenience; but ſince I find you are not eaſy in your circumſtances, let me entreat you to think no further of the ball; I wiſh for no ſuch amuſement, and ſhall moſt chearfully acquieſce in any retrenchments, you may think neceſſary in your ſtyle of living."

"Retrench-

" Retrenchments! indeed; I ſhall make none, I can aſſure you. I was in hopes you could eſſentially have aſſiſted me; but ſince you ſay you can't, I muſt be ſatisfied with the trifle you offer. Go, and fetch it.—But harkee, child, not a ſyllable of this to any creature; particularly to that meddling fellow Bangrove."

Louiſa having produced the money, had permiſſion to retire. Scarcely did ſhe dare revolve in her mind what had paſſed. To arraign a mother's conduct, ſeemed repugnant to the reſpect due to the parental character; and to excuſe it, was inconſiſtent with her own. Every ſentiment of delicacy, and honour in her breaſt, were wounded by the unfortunate diſcovery ſhe had made, and by Lady Roſeville's ſubſequent behaviour.

She flattered herſelf however, that the rupture between her and Sir Ralph Random would be durable; and this was the only conſolatory thought ſhe could dwell upon.

But of this, ſhe was ſhortly deprived. Lady Roſeville the next morning wore a very gloomy countenance; her eyes appeared ſwelled, and ſhe ſeemed not diſpoſed to ſpeak. A letter was delivered to her, which ſhe read with infinite agitation; and after ſwallowing a haſty breakfaſt, ſhe went out in a hackney chair without a ſervant.

Louiſa's mind foreboded no good from the myſterioufneſs

teriouſneſs of her actions; and ſhe remained alone, and diſquieted, till a very late hour; when Lady Roſeville returned to dinner, altogether as gay and jocund, as ſhe had been ſad in the morning.

During dinner ſhe was particularly kind and attentive to her daughter, and as ſoon as the ſervants had retired, ſhe ſaid, "I have agreeable intelligence for you, Louiſa. In the firſt place, I have ſo arranged matters relative to the ball, that I find the expence will be inconſiderable; and in the ſecond, I am ſure it will rejoice your good heart to hear that"—and ſhe coloured violently, and heſitated as ſhe ſpoke, "that two ſuch old friends as Sir Ralph and myſelf, ſhould have made up our little tiff."

"I certainly, Madam, ſincerely wiſh," ſaid Louiſa, "that your tranquillity ſhould never be interrupted. As for the ball, ſince you wiſhed it to take place, I am not ſorry it does, if no material inconvenience will reſult from it: but will you permit me, Madam, to ſay, that I cannot, with equal indifference, ſee your reconciliation with Sir Ralph Random. By your account, he failed much in the reſpect due to you. Is it then conſiſtent with your honour, to ſuffer a man capable of acting thus, to be a frequent viſitor here?"

"Of

"Of that, I am the fitteſt judge," anſwered Lady Roſeville, ſharply; "but one thing I can tell you, that it is not conſiſtent with my humour, to be catechiſed by my daughter,"—and ſhe flounced out of the room.

Louiſa ſaw how much ſhe had offended her mother; but ſhe could not regret, that ſhe had gently hinted to her, the detriment her fame would receive from her unworthy connection, the renewal of which gave her much uneaſineſs.

When ſhe was ſent for to tea, ſhe found Sir Ralph with her mother; the latter glanced at her angry looks, and the former treated her with ſullen ſilence, apparently very ſenſible how little ſhe was pleaſed at his preſence. The behaviour of all three was very conſtrained during tea. Lady Roſeville pleaded an head ach, as an excuſe for putting off an engagement, and ſaid ſhe ſhould ſtay at home; Louiſa repaired to her *piano forte*, but her ſpirits were ill tuned for muſic; and to complete the diſagreeable incidents of the day, Lord Pompuſton took his chance of finding her at home, and calling in, was aſked by Lady Roſeville to ſtay ſupper.

Sir Ralph Random continued from that day to viſit as before in Portman-ſquare; but Lady Roſeville thought fit to be ſomewhat more cicumſpect in her behaviour to him, at leaſt in her daughter's preſence.

Paſſion

Paſſion week now arrived; and as Lady Roſeville apprehended it would be very dull, ſhe determined to have a little party, and a ſupper every night; this would not have been unpleaſant to Louiſa, had her mother's ſociety been congenial to her taſte; but it was almoſt entirely formed of people ſhe could not eſteem. Her friend, Mrs. Raby, who for her ſake, would have waved her objections to viſiting on an intimate footing at Lady Roſeville's, went at this time for a fortnight into the country, for the ſake of her children's health. Her conſtant attendant, Lord Pompouſton, though he did not formally make his propoſals, always addreſſed her in a ſtyle of paſſionate admiration, without appearing ſenſible of any repulſe ſhe could give him. Sir Ralph now forbore to differ openly with him in opinion; content with keeping ſilence, he only by his looks marked his diſſent; while with a malignant pleaſure, he obſerved how much Louiſa ſuffered, in being expoſed to his Lordſhip's perſecutions. While Lady Roſeville made it her buſineſs, to qualify as well as ſhe could her daughter's coldneſs, by her own obliging deportment: he could not be more inclined to receive flattery, than ſhe was to beſtow it on him. Lady Bridget Wilford too, ſhe courted more than ever, determined to neglect nothing to retain her in her intereſt.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

GREAT preparations were making for the ball; at length this day, eagerly wiſhed-for by Lady Roſeville, arrived; the rooms were gaily decorated for the occaſion; the company, ſuch as might be expected at Lady Roſeville's, whoſe acquaintance among women of faſhion was very confined. The appearance of all the ladies was, however, as brilliant as could be ſeen in any place; many of them indeed were people of rank; but of theſe, the chief part, for reaſons little to their credit, had long been excluded from good company. As for the men, they were numerous, and moſt of them of diſtinguiſhed faſhion.

Though Louiſa was now pretty well accuſtomed to her mother's youthful ſtyle of dreſs, ſhe could not, without amazement, ſurvey her appearance this evening. Lady Roſeville having quitted her mourning (which ſhe had made the very ſhorteſt that faſhion could authorize) had given full ſcope to her fancy in the choice of her ornaments; ſhe was covered with feathers, flowers, and foils; while Louiſa, who ſecretly lamented that her mother's authority ſhould compel her to abridge any mark of decent reſpect due to the memory of her beloved grandmother, avoided all glare, and appeared

peared in a white crape dreſs, with a ſimple wreath of white roſes round her head, which ſeemed to ſuit the innocence of her mind, as much as it did the elegance of her figure.

Already the ball was begun; ſhe had juſt gone down the ſecond dance with Lord Pompouſton, much againſt her inclination, when amidſt a group of young men aſſembled at the door, (moſt of them invited by Lady Daſhaway) ſhe perceived Lord Danefield. She now rejoiced, that ſhe had nearly completed the penance of dancing with a man ſhe deteſted, and ſhould be at liberty to accept of Lord Danefield for a partner, whenever he offered himſelf; and ſomething whiſpered her, this would happen very ſhortly. This thought glowed in her cheek, and ſparkled in her eye, while a ſoft ſmile, of which ſhe was ſcarcely ſenſible herſelf, ſtole to her lips; which Lord Pompouſton attributed to her approbation of ſomething he was ſaying, though in fact ſhe was too abſent to hear him. Unuſed to ſuch encouragment, his rapture broke forth in ſuch a manner, as quickly to call up in Louiſa's countenance one of thoſe looks, that bold as he was, ſomewhat checked him.

Her eye now glanced towards Lord Danefield; he was ſtanding leaning againſt the door in a very penſive attitude, whence he ſuddenly ſtarted to go up

up to Miſs Benſley, who was ſitting diſconſolate in a corner, becauſe nobody had aſked her to dance; and preſently after, to Louiſa's ſurprize, they both ſtood up together in the next dance.

Louiſa blamed herſelf for feeling piqued. "What imports it to me," thought ſhe, "whom Lady Almeria Melvern's future huſband dances with?" and ſhe gave her hand to a gentleman, who at that moment ſolicited it.

She went down the dance with her uſual grace; but when ſhe ought to have turned Lord Danefield, ſhe made a ſmall miſtake, and took the gentleman below him.

The next two dances ſhe declined; and now ſhe was joined by Miſs Benſley. "O dear, Miſs Roſeville, cried ſhe, "what a ſweet man Lord Danefield is! I never ſaw any thing equal to his eyes and teeth! I was quite ſurprized when he took me out."

"Ah! thought Louiſa, "ſo was I too."

"And do you know," continued Miſs Benſley, "I had no acquaintance with him before: but I recollect you know very well, for he was the perſon who prevented that brute of a coachman from killing you. Pray, could not you contrive to make up a cotillon, and let him be my partner?—you can't think how I ſhould like it."

"O I can eaſily imagine it," ſaid Louiſa with a ſmile;

ſmile; "but you will, I hope, excuſe me from undertaking ſo much; and Lady Daſhaway has juſt ſettled to have a few minuets, to give the dancers time to cool before ſupper."

Theſe were accordingly performed. While Miſs Benſley was dancing, Lady Bridget was making thoſe near her, obſerve her niece's excellence, which otherwiſe never would have been diſcovered. "Only mind, *Madam*, her *pas grave*; my niece is acknowledged to be the fineſt minuet dancer in England."

Lady Daſhaway had reſerved Louiſa for the concluding minuet, to whom ſhe led Lord Danefield. "If I miſtake not," ſaid ſhe, "this will be a moſt admirable performance: we have already ſeen what Lord Danefield can do, and he will not, I fancy, exert himſelf the leſs, for having *you* for a partner; you appear to me both to have been taught by the ſame maſter, (nor was ſhe miſtaken) and both dance with inimitable grace."

Louiſa determined to ſhew herſelf not unworthy of praiſe, or of ſuch a partner; he too ſeemed animated, and deſirous to excel; and they excited a degree of applauſe, which is ſeldom beſtowed but on ſtage dancers.

The ſupper immediately after being announced, Lord Danefield placed himſelf by Louiſa, who was trying to check the riſing ſatisfaction of her mind, when

when an unforeſeen circumſtance entirely damped it.

This was the provoking conduct of Lord Pompouſton, who choſe to ſtand cloſe behind her; refuſing every ſeat that was offered him, that he might beſtow his whole attention upon, and prevent any particular converſation between, her and Lord Danefield.

The latter ſeveral times caſt upon him very diſſatisfied looks; and perceiving that he took upon himſelf the office of helping Louiſa to whatever ſhe called for, his patience was quite exhauſted.

"I fancy, Lord Pompouſton," cried he, "that you apprehend I ſhall neglect my partner, by the unneceſſary trouble you give yourſelf; you had much better remember what is due to your own, who is at the other table, than ſtand here, and intercept every little breeze of air that might reach Miſs Roſeville."

"A thouſand thanks for the hint," returned Lord Pompouſton, with a mock bow; "but this place happens to ſuit me better than any other."

"But perhaps it may not ſuit me to ſuffer you here; and I wonder you do not perceive how much you incommode Miſs Roſeville; therefore I muſt requeſt your removal."

"Muſt you, indeed! but ſuppoſe I don't chooſe to ſtir? let Miſs Roſeville ſpeak for herſelf. I'll

I'll be anſwerable for it, ſhe will not ſay I incommode her."

Louiſa would gladly have contradicted him; but already exceſſively alarmed, ſaid, "ſhe did not find it very warm."

Though Lord Pompouſton well knew her motive for not ſiding with Lord Danefield, he pretended to conſtrue her words, as an encouragement to ſtay. Caſting a look of triumph at the former, (who could ſcarce contain his anger) he leant down, and whiſpering in Louiſa's ear, burſt into a loud laugh; preſſing all the while ſignedly on Lord Danefield's ſhoulder.

This prop, he was in an inſtant deprived of; for Lord Danefield ſtarted up, and taking Louiſa's hand, "Come, Madam," ſaid he, "let us remove to the ſide next the wall; I ſee there is room; and let Lord Pompouſton," added he, looking at him ſignificantly, and lowering his voice as he bruſhed by him, "follow if he dare."

"Dare, Sir!" cried the other fiercely, "I ſhall make you repent this inſolence."

"Poſſibly I may chaſtiſe yours; but the ladies," continued Lord Danefield, ſmothering his anger, "muſt not be alarmed with idle vaunts—*here* you may ſay what you pleaſe,—*this* is not the place to notice your behaviour."

"It might indeed derange your projects; you well

well know, that you are unable to contend any point with me."

" This is too much !" cried Lord Danefield, in a tranſport of rage, that he could no longer reſtrain; and haſtily quitting Louiſa's hand, he darted out of the room.

Louiſa, ready to ſink with terror, in vain attempted to ſtop him. " Oh! for God's ſake, don't ſtir! Why this contention?"

But Lord Danefield was already out of hearing. Pale and trembling ſhe returned, and catching hold of Lord Pompouſton's arm, ſhe attempted to ſpeak, but her lips refuſed utterance. He ſaw her agony, but it only ſerved to exaſperate him the more, as he too plainly ſaw, that all her anxiety was for Lord Danefield's ſafety.

The gentlemen preſent prevented his immediate departure; Lady Bridget Wilford took him aſide, and attempted to ſooth him; at her requeſt he played a rubber at whiſt, but he retained the malice of his heart; and this incident caſt ſuch a gloom over the *fête*, that no creature thought of dancing after ſupper, but ſlipped away as faſt as they could.

Louiſa, exceedingly diſordered, retired in her own apartment, was ſuffering inconceivable anxiety, dreading the conſequences of this fray; which to avert if poſſible, ſhe diſpatched a note to

Mr.

Mr. Melcomb, the only perſon whom ſhe had any hopes of influencing; to mediate between the two Lords, and prevent a duel.

While ſhe waited impatiently for the return of her meſſenger, Lady Roſeville bounced into the room. "Pray, Miſs Roſeville," ſaid ſhe, "what was the cauſe of the pretty confuſion during ſupper?" And without waiting for an anſwer ſhe continued.

"Was it not owing to your coquettry? What buſineſs had you to ſuffer Lord Danefield, who is as good as married, to ſit by you, and let poor Lord Pompouſton ſtand all the while? Shame on you! I have no patience with you! Never was there any thing more provoking than your conduct! There, when I had put myſelf to ſuch trouble and expence all upon your account, to have ſuch a charming *fête* end ſo diſagreeably! God knows what the conſequences may be; but I dare ſay you wiſh to have a duel fought about you."

"Ah! Madam," interrupted Louiſa, burſting into tears, "theſe reproaches are unmerited—thank God! I have none to make myſelf in this affair, though I am unſpeakably wretched about it."

She then faithfully related all that had paſſed—"What could I do, Madam," added ſhe, "had Lord Pompouſton ſat down quietly by his partner,

this would not have happened; but he choſe to behave in a manner——"

"I will not hear a word againſt him," cried Lady Roſeville.

Louiſa then told her, what ſhe had juſt done; and her mother, wiſhing her good ſucceſs, without however waiting to hear it, went to bed, where ſhe ſlept compoſedly; while Louiſa counted the moments till the chairman returned, who brought her word, that he had ſent the note up to Mr. Melcomb, who was in bed, and that he had received no other meſſage in anſwer, "but that it was very well," and that Miſs Roſeville ſhould hear from him in the morning.

"Oh my God!" cried ſhe, "what is now to be done! Mr. Melcomb ſurely never can have read my note, otherwiſe he could not have ſhewed ſuch indifference.—Return this moment," ſaid ſhe to the chairman, "and get an immediate anſwer."

The fellow ſoon came back, ſaying, that he had knocked and rung at Mr. Melcomb's door, but could make no body hear him.

Louiſa found there was no remedy, and that ſhe was deſtined to continue the whole night in this uneaſy ſtate—it was however rather morning than night. Sometimes ſhe thought of writing to one of the angry Lords; but there appeared ſtrong objections to this meaſure.

If

If Lord Pompouſton, at her requeſt, ſhould wave his reſentment, beſides the inferences he would deduce from it, there could be no doubt, but that he would make to himſelf with her, ſuch a merit of his forbearance, as would embaraſs her exceedingly.

Lord Danefield, amiable and generous, ſhe had not courage to addreſs; ſhe could think of no terms at all adequate to her purpoſe; and ſhe apprehended, that in the agitation of her ſpirits, ſhe ſhould betray an intereſt in his welfare, ſuch as Lady Almeria Melvern alone, would be authorized to ſhew: but ſhe reſolved as ſoon as the ſtreets began to be in motion, to repair to Hill-ſtreet, and ſee Melcomb herſelf—how unlucky did ſhe think Mrs. Raby's abſence!

Upon her arrival, ſhe learned from the ſervant, that Mr. Melcomb was already gone out:—this gave her ſome comfort.

In fact, Mr. Melcomb, with his ſtrict notions of honour, had ſeen this affair in a very different light than that in which Louiſa ſaw it; and not being able to give her any ſatisfaction on the ſubject of her note, he judged it beſt to let it remain unanſwered till he could tell her how this buſineſs was ſettled, and *he* had no doubts *how* that ſhould be. So far from wiſhing to prevent a duel, he rather rejoiced that an opportunity offered for his young friend to ſignalize

his courage; and he was not a little pleaſed, that his near connections with him, added to the intimacy that ſubſiſted between them, would probably render the propoſal of being his ſecond, acceptable.

Louiſa's information carried him therefore immediately to Lord Danefield, who had not gone to bed, and was writing. He was not a little ſurprized to ſee Melcomb at ſuch an hour, and eagerly aſked what brought him thither? Melcomb, in anſwer, ſhewed him Louiſa's note.

"Amiable Miſs Roſeville!" cried Lord Danefield, "your wiſhes, however, in this inſtance, muſt be ineffectual."

"Certainly," cried Melcomb, eagerly; "you muſt not put up with an inſult; but let me hear all that paſſed."

Lord Danefield related the whole affair, which Melcomb ſaid, rendered a challenge indiſpenſable; he undertook himſelf to deliver it, and to arrange every thing relative to this buſineſs.

Lord Pompouſton did not decline it, though he ſeemed not quite prepared for ſuch expeditious meaſures. As he had the choice of weapons, he ſaid Lord Danefield's chance would be rather better with the ſword than with piſtols; as it was a well-known fact, that he was the beſt markſman

in

in the kingdom, could hit a card at twenty yards diſtance, and ſhoot a ſwallow flying.

But to his no ſmall aſtoniſhment he learned, that his antagoniſt would *venture* to meet him with piſtols.

An Iriſh officer was his ſecond, but notwithſtanding his boaſting, an univerſal tremour came over him; he miſſed fire; was wounded by *him* he had affected to deſpiſe, in his right ſhoulder, and carried fainting off the field. His ſecond, with a ſurgeon that had been provided, conveyed him to his own houſe; and Lord Danefield judged it prudent to conceal himſelf, till he could obtain more certain information of Lord Pompouſton's condition, and till the ball had been extracted.

Melcomb having ſeen him ſafe, and applauded his cool manly conduct, went immediately to Portman-ſquare, whither Louiſa was returned, to whom he gave the above account, and deſired ſhe would excuſe his ſeeming impoliteneſs, as he had conceived his friend's honour to be at ſtake.

Though Louiſa, in hearing of Lord Danefield's ſafety, felt relieved from no inconſiderable part of her diſquietude, much yet remained, after the firſt impulſe of joy was over. Lord Danefield had unfortunately wounded his adverſary, and Melcomb's aſſurances that no danger was apprehended, were inſufficient to calm her fears: hated too as

was the object, ſhe ſhuddered at the idea of his death, and that Lord Danefield ſhould have imbrued his hands in blood! Nor could ſhe think, with unconcern, of the noiſe this affair would make, that her name ſhould be mingled in it, or, on the impreſſion Lady Almeria Melvern might receive from it, ſhould it (as was far from improbable) be unfairly repreſented to her.

This, Melcomb himſelf undertook to obviate, by going directly, and communicating it to Lord Melvern, which he had promiſed Lord Danefield he would do.

As ſoon as he was gone, Louiſa entered upon a deeper ſcrutiny into the nature of her ſentiments for Lord Danefield, than ſhe had hitherto dared to undertake. All diſguiſe was at an end; the incidents of the laſt night, had too clearly convinced her of the weakneſs of her heart: but reſolute not to yield to it, ſhe determined henceforth to avoid thoſe dangerous meetings at Mrs. Raby's, and to ſee him as ſeldom as poſſible.

The fatigue of the ball prevented Lady Roſeville's appearance till a very late hour in the breakfaſt-room; but the news of the duel ſeemed ſtamped on her forehead, and it occaſioned her to accoſt Louiſa in much anger.

"So;" ſaid ſhe, "a fine piece of work you have made, truly! With all your airs of propriety and

and diſcretion, I find you have not ſcrupled to ſet two men together by the ears;—and poor dear Lord Pompouſton, is to be the martyr of this! For I can aſſure you, Miſs Roſeville, I hear he is dying."

"I hope not, Madam; but were it as you ſay, I am perfectly innocent."

"O to be ſure, very innocent! But you will not make the world think ſo, ſpecious as you are.—There's Lady Bridget half diſtracted, and Miſs Benſley in fits—I am going to them immediately; and ſo Ma'am, I leave you to enjoy the miſchief you have made."

"Upon my word, Madam——"

"Hold your tongue; I'll hear nothing—here, I had ſet my heart upon ſeeing you Lady Pompouſton—the event ſeemed in a fair way of ſucceſs—when, by your ſhameful encouragement of Lord Danefield, you mar my ſcheme; and now, God knows what will happen!"—and away ſhe flounced.

The favourable report the ſurgeon gave of his Lordſhip's wound, ſomewhat pacified Lady Roſeville, and ſhe returned in better humour. But ſhe could talk of nothing elſe but this affair the reſt of the day; and many acrimonious ſpeeches againſt Lord Danefield were directed to Louiſa, who heard them in ſilence, pained, and diſtreſſed;

yet, avoiding to take his part, however juſtified in her own mind that ſhe might not incur ſuſpicions, which ſhe was ſenſible, would be but too-well grounded.

Lady Roſeville, who had ſaid the more, in order to penetrate into her daughter's ſentiments, finding ſhe liſtened calmly, without offering the leaſt oppoſition to whatever ſhe advanced, imagined that ſhe had been too eaſily alarmed, and that, in fact, Louiſa was indifferent: ſhe recollected too, that the acquaintance that ſubſiſted between her and Lord Danefield, was very ſlight (for ſhe was ignorant how often they had met at Mrs. Raby's) that Louiſa, different from moſt young people, ſeemed little diſpoſed to contract ſudden partialities; and upon the whole, it appeared improbable, that Lord Danefield, ſituated as he was, ſhould ſtand in the way of her favourite.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

WHATEVER diſlike Lady Roſeville had taken to Bangrove, it was by no means eaſy for her, while her affairs were in his hands, to break with him entirely; nor was he a perſon to be diſmiſſed with ſo little ceremony.

It is not to be doubted, but that Louiſa had inſpired him with cordial good will; but this actuated him leſs, than pique and reſentment at finding he had loſt all influence with Lady Roſeville; whom, prior to her intimacy with Sir Ralph Random, he had been in the habit of governing: and, added to his wiſh of thwarting one, and ſerving the other, he had a ſtill more powerful motive in his own breaſt—this was a reſtleſs and inſatiable deſire to pry into, and meddle with, the affairs of others.

He arrived in Portman-ſquare the next morning, before Lady Roſeville and Louiſa had finiſhed breakfaſt. His reception was not very encouraging from either. Lord Pompouſton had had a bad night; and this information had put Lady Roſeville into extreme ill humour.

Louiſa, though ſhe had proved the truth of his ſagacity, had always a diſtruſt of a man, who from being a confidential friend, ſuddenly became

an avowed foe: *her* good had, indeed, been the oſtenſible motive of his communications; but her penetration led her to ſuſpect thoſe already mentioned.

Bangrove had too much to learn, to be over faſtidious at that moment; ſo without ſeeming to notice that his company was not particularly welcome, he paid his compliments with his uſual preciſion; and then, unable to contain himſelf any longer, he exclaimed,

"Good God! Ladies, what a terrible buſineſs this is! I hear Lord Pompouſton, who had been at your ball the night before laſt, was run through the body yeſterday morning; and that Lord Danefield, though much wounded, is gone off to France."

"No matter what becomes of him," cried Lady Roſeville, peeviſhly; "but God, be praiſed, Lord Pompouſton's wound is not ſo bad as you have heard. I can't think, Mr. Bangrove, where you pick up your intelligence; but it is always ſure to be falſe."

"I crave pardon, Madam, but any body may be miſinformed; if I am deceived by others, I am not reſponſible for their lies."

"True—But methinks, your own judgment (which you value not a little) might ſometimes teach you to diſcriminate better than you do."

"Well,

" Well, Madam; what I am now going to tell you is a fact, that you may depend upon. I happened yeſterday to be at Lord Melvern's early in the morning, upon ſome buſineſs about an encloſure, when the news came. It was then differently told (for a ſtory undergoes a variety of forms in the courſe of a few hours) Lord Danefield was repreſented, as dangerouſly wounded; upon hearing this, Lady Almeria Melvern, (a very fine young lady, his Lordſhip's daughter) fainted away. I cannot ſay I ſaw her Ladyſhip; but a ſervant came and fetched my Lord, and while one was running here, and t'other flying there, I whipped up my papers, and marched off."

" Lady Almeria has infinite ſenſibility," ſaid Lady Roſeville; " but, Sir, you, who are always ſo accurately informed of what ever paſſes, ſeem however, to be ignorant, that Miſs Roſeville, who ſits there, looking ſo meek and innocent, is the cauſe of all this."

" Heaven forbid!" cried Bangrove.

" It is however true," returned Lady Roſeville.

" Amazing!" cried he, " but to be ſure there never is a quarrel, that a woman is not at the bottom of it. But pray, Miſs Roſeville, prudent as you are, may I be ſo bold to aſk how this could happen?"

"You muſt excuſe me, Sir; I have not ſpirits to enter into any detail of this unfortunate affair; but of this you may be aſſured, that it was owing to no fault of mine."

"I can readily believe it, Madam: but tho' it is no wonder, that young hot-headed men ſhould quarrel about ſuch a pretty lady, it is extraordinary they ſhould not diſcover, that the law would afford them a ſafer, and more eligible revenge than the ſword: if one man provokes another by words or blows, he ought to bring an action againſt the offender."

"Mighty fine doctrine, indeed! and juſt what one might expect from *you*. But to wave this matter, have you any buſineſs with me?" ſaid Lady Roſeville.

He then produced a bundle of papers, for her inſpection; and Louiſa retired, reflecting on her mother's cruel and uncandid behaviour; and on Lady Almeria Melvern's ſudden indiſpoſition; whence ſhe concluded, either that ſhe was, or pretended to be, violently in love with Lord Danefield. "She is, ſaid ſhe, "ſuppoſed to be very affected; all amiable then, as Lord Danefield is, he may have made but a ſlight impreſſion on her: for my grandmother uſed to ſay, that thoſe who delight to diſplay factitious ſentiments, are ſeldom capable of feeling *any* that are real.

At that inſtant the door flew open, and Mrs. Raby appeared; the ſight of ſuch a friend, was like balm to Louiſa's depreſſed ſpirits. Mrs. Raby was juſt returned from the country; and ſhe had heard from her brother the late diſaſter.

She tenderly pitied poor Louiſa, who ſhe knew muſt have ſuffered a great deal on the occaſion; and ſhe told her that the ſurgeon, who attended Lord Pompouſton, ſtill aſſured Mr. Melcomb, that he was in no danger.

"So much the better," cried Louiſa; "for ſuch a man, muſt be ill prepared for ſudden death. But do not let us talk of him."

"You had rather, perhaps," ſaid Mrs. Raby, with a ſmile, "that Lord Danefield ſhould be the ſubject."

"Neither he, nor the other," anſwered Louiſa, bluſhing.

"Why have you no deſire to hear what is become of him?"

"I heard that he was ſafe," ſaid Louiſa, with an air almoſt peeviſh, "and what elſe is it neceſſary I ſhould know?"

"O nothing at all—but come, tell me a little, what you have been doing during my abſence; you look pale and thin."

"I have had many vexations," replied Louiſa; and ſhe related Lord Pompouſton's perſecutions, and

and the indifferent terms which it was her misfortune to be on, with her mother. But ſhe forbore mentioning Lady Roſeville's application to her for money, or any thing relative to Sir Ralph Random.

The two friends, after a long and comfortable confabulation, ſeparated, mutually promiſing to meet often.

Almoſt every day producing a favourable account of Lord Pompouſton's health, Lady Roſeville reſumed her uſual mode of life; except that ſhe generally devoted a ſmall portion of each day, to be ſpent with the relations of the ſick man, who confined themſelves entirely to his houſe; ſo that as Louiſa never went thither, ſhe never ſaw them, during this period: much as ſhe hated him, ſhe was too generous to be ſorry at his amended health; though perhaps ſhe would have rejoiced, had he, without ſuffering much, been condemned a long confinement.

Ten days had now elapſed ſince the duel; and Lord Danefield no longer thought it neceſſary to conceal himſelf; indeed, he would not have ſubmitted to do ſo at all, but at the earneſt deſire of Lord Melvern. Louiſa had not yet ſeen him, for ſhe had purpoſely to avoid him, forborn to go in a morning to Mrs. Raby.

One day after breakfaſt, Lady Roſeville, with

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an air of anxiety remarked, that ſince the weather had been ſo wet, Louiſa had been unable to take her uſual walk; and propoſed, for the ſake of her health, as it was a fine ſpring morning, that ſhe ſhould accompany her in an airing.

Louiſa aſſented, and the carriage drove to Wimpole-ſtreet. "I won't," ſaid Lady Roſeville, "detain you long;—but I have juſt recollected, that I have a few words to ſay to the lady who lives here; ſtep in with me, my dear."

Louiſa cheerfully complied; but to her no ſmall aſtoniſhment, ſhe found herſelf uſhered into a drawing room; where lay upon a ſopha, in the *coſtume* of an invalid, Lord Pompouſtoun! Lady Bridget Wilford and Miſs Benſley were ſitting by him. At this ſight ſhe ſtood motionleſs at the door; but Miſs Benſley running up to her, took her hand, and led her to a ſeat.

While Lord Pompouſton raiſing himſelf a little on his pillow, exclaimed, "This is very good indeed, Miſs Roſeville; the ſight of you, is like the balmy breath of ſpring; already I feel its influence; can I then thank you ſufficiently?"

"I am glad," ſaid Louiſa, "to find you ſo much better, Lord Pompouſton; but be not deceived; you are not at all beholden to me, for I was brought hither unknowingly."

Lady Roſeville frowned very expreſſively. Lord Pompouſton

Pompouſton coloured. "Do not, Madam," ſaid he, "attempt to leſſen the favour, by this unkind denial. Think what I have endured by becoming your champion."

Louiſa checked an anſwer that was riſing to her lips, in conſideration of his condition.

"Pray, Pompouſton," cried Lady Bridget, "don't talk ſo much; I was charged to keep you quiet." Then turning, with a haughty air, to Louiſa, "I think, *Madam*, all circumſtances conſidered, that you need not have diſcovered, that you did not come of your own accord, to enquire after my nephew—*you* owe to him, and indeed to all of us, ſome little attention, I muſt ſay.

"Don't fancy," cried Lord Pompouſton, "that I can poſſibly continue ſilent in Miſs Roſeville's preſence, unleſs ſhe were ſeated at the *piano forte*. How often have I not wiſhed, during my confinement, to be lulled to ſleep by her melodious ſounds!"

"Lord, couſin! if you had told me," cried Miſs Benſley, "that muſic would have done you good, I am ſure I'd have come with all my heart, and have played to you. It would be very eaſy to have my harpſichord brought here."

"God in heaven forbid!" cried Lord Pompouſton, half ſtarting off the ſopha, "the very thought of ſuch a thing puts me into a tremor.

Nobody,

Nobody, child, doubts your good will; but, Fanny, you know in all Iſrael, there was only one David, that could charm Saul's troubled ſpirit; ſo there is in all England, but *one* Louiſa for me."

"You are monſtrouſly ungrateful," cried Miſs Benſley, in a pet; "I am ſure I have been nurſing you, as if you had been my brother; yet you can't forbear ſaying diſobliging things to me."

Louiſa, who thought every moment an age, that ſhe paſſed under Lord Pompouſton's roof, and who was now regarded with no more cordiality by Miſs Benſley, than by her aunt, obſerving that her mother ſeemed to have no intention of moving, ſaid to her, in a low voice, "as you ſeem, Madam, to have given up your ſcheme of airing, you will not, I hope, object to my taking a little walk; ſo if you pleaſe," raiſing her voice, "with my good wiſhes for Lord Pompouſton's ſpeedy recovery, I will take my leave."

Lord Pompouſton then, with great vehemence, preſſed her ſtay; and Lady Roſeville commanded it; ſo that ſhe was obliged to remain above an hour in this unpleaſant ſituation, fretting beyond meaſure, to have been thus trepanned.

As ſoon as ſhe was ſeated with her mother in the carriage, on their return home, the latter ſaid, "really, Louiſa, I bluſhed at your ill breeding to Lord Pompouſton; if he was not the beſt tempered

pered man in the world, he would not value you after ſuch uſage; but I can perceive his relations are quite affronted with you."

"I cannot help it, Madam; it was impoſſible I could ſuffer Lord Pompouſton to think for one moment, that I was particularly intereſted about him."

"Why not, pray; who deſerves more from you, than a man who evidently adores you?"

"I hope not, Madam; it has, from my firſt acquaintance with his Lordſhip, been my conſtant endeavour to diſcourage any partiality towards me,"

Lady Roſeville frowned, but made no reply; after ſetting her daughter down at home, ſhe drove out to make viſits; and Louiſa, to make herſelf amends for the unpleaſant moments ſhe had paſſed, reſolved, (even though ſhe might meet with Lord Danefield) to call on Mrs. Raby, whom ſhe found juſt going to take a walk in Hyde Park; thither Louiſa accompanied her.

In their way back, they ſaw a decent looking woman, who, without aſking charity of them by ſpeech (apparently reſtrained by an honeſt pride) implored it with her eye, and ſtill more by a touching ſadneſs ſpread over her whole form.

One infant was at her breaſt whining, becauſe it found no nouriſhment; another, ſhe with difficulty

culty dragged along, for it was whimpering, and falling at every ſtep; and a third, poor lame boy, with a jaundiced complexion, was faintly hobbling behind her.

Both the ladies' attention was fixed upon theſe objects, and by the ſame impulſe, both at that inſtant felt for their purſes, and haſtened to give ſomething, where it ſeemed ſo much wanted.

The relief was ſcarcely expected, and far beyond what the poor woman could have hoped. Her gratitude manifeſted itſelf in language, different from the common cant of beggars. In few words ſhe told a tale, ſhort and pathetic.

Her parents had been ſhopkeepers; they had met with misfortunes, and died with hearts, and circumſtances alike broken. She had married an induſtrious young man, and things had gone on tolerably ſmooth with them for a few years; but their family encreaſing faſt, her huſband was gone to the Eaſt Indies as a ſailor, to gain ſomething towards their maintenance. She might have made a ſhift, by hard labour, to have ſupported herſelf and children, but ſhe could not let her huſband's mother, a poor woman turned of ſeventy, and in declining health, periſh for want of aſſiſtance; this additional charge, and a long illneſs, with which ſhe had been herſelf afflicted, had borne ſo hard upon her, that now ſhe was incapacitated

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for work; and the old woman, her children, and ſelf, were reduced to the moſt poignant diſtreſs.

Mrs. Raby and Louiſa determined to verify this account; and having learned the place of her abode, they agreed (but without telling her of their deſign) that they would call upon her, the following morning.

They found the old woman as deſcribed, ſinking under a painful malady, and a degree of poverty and wretchedneſs that baffles all deſcription. Mrs. Raby, extremely intelligent in regard to ſick people, was of opinion, that the firſt thing neceſſary to be done was, if poſſible, to remove the old woman into a larger room, as the cloſe air ſhe breathed in a ſmall garret, where ſo many poor wretches were cooped together, quite ſuffocated her: but before ſhe decided upon this meaſure, ſhe ſent for her apothecary, who lived juſt by, to conſult him as to its ſafety, the old woman only giving ſigns of life, by her convulſive pantings.

While her ſervant was gone for the apothecary, Louiſa ſtood talking at the window with the poor lame boy, who cried out, "look, Sukey, over the way; there's the fine gentleman in the ſcarlet coat, who gave you that big piece of money one day."

Sukey ran to the window; ſhe looked, and ſo did Louiſa, who beheld Lord Danefield handing

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an exceſſive pretty young woman into a hackney coach, into which he afterwards ſprung himſelf.

A ſenſation entirely new, now agitated the breaſt of our heroine. "Where did that gentleman meet with you, little girl?"

"In this very ſtreet, Madam; I had been to fetch ſomething for my granny, and my foot ſlipped, and down I fell, and hurt my arm very much, upon which the lady you juſt ſaw ſaid, poor thing! and ſeemed as if ſhe would have given me ſomethin; but the gentleman ſaid, "no, no, Lucy; let me; and he picked me up, and gave me half a crown, and ſo I went immediately, and got a bit of meat to make granny ſome broth, for we had none of us taſted any thing but bread and water for a long while, and——"

"Does the gentleman," interrupted Louiſa, "often come into this ſtreet?"

"I don't know, Madam; I am generally by granny's bed ſide, for mammy can't attend to her, and to the little ones beſides; but I ſometimes ſee him and the lady, when I happen to go out on an errand."

"Alas!" ſaid Louiſa mentally, "hitherto I have fancied that a prior engagement alone ſtood in my way; but Lord Danefield aſſuredly is a libertine; this girl muſt be his miſtreſs! Poor creature, ſhe has probably been ſeduced by his captivating

captivating manners! But I am glad I know his depravity, otherwiſe perhaps I might have lamented that he could not be mine."

Every thing being ſettled, not only in regard to the old woman, for whom the apothecary undertook to procure a decent lodging, a nurſe, and proper medicines, but likewiſe all that concerned the relief and comfort of the reſt of the family, the ladies returned to their reſpective habitations, but with their thoughts differently employed. Mrs. Raby felt, without allay, that ſweet ſatisfaction, that ever attends a virtuous action; but, Louiſa, though of a diſpoſition equally humane, loſt almoſt all recollection of her ſhare in it, ſo much was ſhe ſurprized and chagrined, at her ſuppoſed diſcovery.

A few days after, Lady Roſeville and Louiſa went into the city to make ſome purchaſes; in paſſing through the narrow part of the Strand, they were ſtopped by a concourſe of carriages, forming two ranks, one going forward, the other returning; the latter firſt began to move, and Louiſa perceived Lord Danefield with the very ſame young perſon, whom ſhe had ſeen with him in Duke-ſtreet; his carriage was ſtopped a few ſeconds along ſide of hers; ſhe ſaw that he attempted to bow to her, but ſhe would not pretend to ſee him; and that Lady Roſeville might not, ſhe

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directed her attention to ſomething the other ſide of the way.

Louiſa, confirmed in her ſuſpicion, and irritated at his preſumption, in noticing her when he was in ſuch company, ſeverely condemned her own judgment, for having thought too favourably of ſuch a man. "Mrs. Raby, and her brother," ſaid ſhe, "like the reſt of the world, are biaſſed by their partialities; they think him perfect; I will not undeceive them, but ſurely I ought to be, —O certainly I am very happy that I have diſcovered his unworthineſs. This will teach me to be diffident of my own penetration; and not fooliſhly to ſuppoſe, becauſe a man can talk agreeably, and diſplay fine ſentiments, that in reality he acts conformably to them.

Her morning viſits were now abſolutely ſelf-proſcribed; and Mrs. Raby ſeldom ſaw her, but in Portman-ſquare, where, without aſſigning any reaſon, Louiſa ſcarcely ſuffered her to mention Lord Danefield's name.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.

CHANCE however, a few days after the *rencontre* in the Strand, made Lord Danefield overtake Louiſa in the ſtreet, as ſhe was returning from a walk, and he joined her.

"It is ſo long, Madam," ſaid he, "ſince I have had the happineſs of ſeeing you, and I have ſo many apologies to make, that I hope you will allow me the honour of attending you home.

"Apologies! Lord Danefield; you owe me none."

"That air of indifference, Madam, mortifies me more than I can expreſs; believe me, I have ſuffered much, that I ſhould have been the unhappy cauſe of giving you pain; yet, conſider the provocations I received, *ſuch* as not even my reſpect for you could enable me to bear—I proteſt too, I was entirely ignorant of Lord Pompouſton's felicity; had I known it, I ſhould at once have ſurrendered my ſeat to him: but, as no very unhappy conſequences have followed, and that he is now almoſt recovered, for Heaven's ſake forgive me, and do not, as you did t'other day, when I had the good fortune to meet you, avert your eyes from me."

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This ſpeech, far from having the deſired effect, made Louiſa anſwer with impatience,

" I really don't underſtand your Lordſhip ;—I know of no felicity that has befallen Lord Pompouſton—you were both much too warm ;—but you muſt excuſe me, my Lord, for ſaying, there is ſuch indelicacy in reminding me of a late circumſtance, wherein I had cauſe to be offended, that I ſhould wonder at it, could I now be aſtoniſhed at any thing your Lordſhip ſaid or did."

" Good God! Miſs Roſeville, what have I ſaid, that can offend your delicacy? Surely not by hinting at your engagement with Lord Pompouſton? Could I ſuppoſe it to be a ſecret, after having ſeen you myſelf, go and viſit him in the broad face of day? Nor are the preparations he is making a ſecret—his carriages and liveries are beſpoken ; and he told a perſon of my acquaintance, that as ſoon as his health was reſtored, he ſhould carry to Ireland the loveliеſt bride that ever left this kingdom—who could he mean but you?"

" I have never heard a ſyllable of what you mention—the viſit I do not deny—how that came to paſs, it is unneceſſary to explain ; but you may be aſſured, that Lord Pompouſton has never propoſed to me, and that if he did, I ſhould inſtantly refuſe him ; yet, I know not, whether the features of a character, which openly ſwell with pride and

conceit, are ſo deteſtable as thoſe that are poliſhed into a milder form, to conceal ſecret depravity."

"You are quite right, Madam; though I cannot imagine what has occaſioned you to make this reflection at preſent: certainly, *rien n'eſt beau que le vrai, le vrai ſeul eſt aimable.* Therefore, thoſe only can be eſtimable, who diſdain diſguiſe."

"How inconvenient that would be to many!" cried Louiſa.

"Poſſibly it might;" returned Lord Danefield, "but why, Miſs Roſeville, ſhould we beſtow a thought upon odious characters; we can never differ in opinion about them? Ah! if you knew how wretched I were, you would not look upon me with ſuch ſeverity; for howſoever, I rejoice to hear that you are not deſtined, to belong to ſuch an unworthy being as Lord Pompouſton, ſome other happy man (whoſe father has not, like mine, cruelly entailed upon him a wife) will aſpire to that hand, which—but—I muſt reſtrain the effuſions of my ſoul—pardon me, Madam, alas! I know not what I ſay."

He ſeemed extremely agitated, and Louiſa herſelf was not unmoved. "Can this man be a libertine; and can he, who ſeems to abhor vice, be a ſeducer?" thought ſhe, "He would wiſh me to believe, that he loves me—fortunately, I have

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ſeen enough to prevent my being credulous—how blameable is he in every reſpect!"

"I am ſingularly unlucky," cried Lord Danefield; "when firſt I met you, I had no intention but to deprecate your anger; perhaps I might have done ſo, had I not, by an irreſiſtible impulſe, betrayed the ſecret of my heart; but agreeably ſurprized to hear, that Lord Pompouſton was not my rival——"

"Hold," cried Louiſa, very gravely, "this language, my Lord, is, on every account, highly improper—I am no ſtranger to your ſituation, nor to your attachment; and beg that henceforth, you will never addreſs me, in any other light, than as an acquaintance."

"Do not," cried he, "do not, call my fatal engagement, an attachment! Alas! it was formed without my being conſulted,—I am yet far from decided to confirm it; my breaſt is agitated with contending paſſions—on one hand, the neceſſity of my affairs, ſtrongly preſcribes the expediency of the meaſure; but my obligations to Lord Melvern, who has been a ſecond father to me, ſpeak ſtill more forcibly to my heart—I cannot, without reluctance, think of mortifying him, by ſlighting his daughter; indeed, ſhe herſelf deſerves better from a man, whom ſhe honours with her eſteem: but, on the other hand, an attraction, ſweet,

powerful, and ſcarcely to be reſiſted, draws off my thoughts from Lady Almeria, and combats all my reſolves—Ah! Miſs Roſeville, ſurely I merit your pity!"

"How artfully he endeavours to turn my ſuſpicions," thought Louiſa, "from the real object of his affections!" Then courteſying to him, as ſhe aſcended the threſhold of her mother's door; "it is in your power, Lord Danefield, to regain my eſteem; I once thought it had been ſecurely your own; but as for pity, I never beſtow it undeſervedly."

And the door being opened, Lord Danefield retired with a dejected air.

Though Louiſa, by her behaviour to Lord Danefield, had, with proper dignity, repreſſed the avowal of ſentiments, which his ſituation, in regard to Lady Almeria Melvern, and ſtill more, his preſent connection, forbade her to hear; her heart ſecretly murmured, that ſhe ſhould have been compelled to receive with ſeverity, a declaration, which, but for theſe unfortunate circumſtances, would have rendered her ſupremely happy. There ſeemed an inconſiſtency in Lord Danefield's conduct, that ſhe could by no means account for; the diſcovery he had made of his ſentiments, ſeemed unpremeditated, occaſioned by an impulſe almoſt involuntary, and the agitation he had been under,

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precluded all ſuſpicion of feint—what then was to be inferred? That he was of a light and fickle diſpoſition, prone to change, and capable only of a momentary ſenſibility. Her mind was cruelly perturbed by theſe reflections, and ſhe reſolved, whatever pain it might coſt her, thence to diſcard his image.

She was ſitting penſive in her chamber, when Lady Roſeville appeared, with a triumphant air, a letter in her hand. "Here," cried ſhe, "if I gueſs right, I bring you tidings, that will not, I hope, be diſagreeable: this letter, probably, contains propoſals from Lord Pompouſton—I have long expected them—now, let's ſee what he ſays."

Louiſa took the letter coolly—"I am not ſorry if he has formally declared himſelf, becauſe I ſhall now have an opportunity of putting an end to his purſuit."

"An end to his purſuit!" echoed Lady Roſeville, "Surely, you can have no ſuch idea? Come, come; you are not ſo ſilly, as you would fain have me believe—read the letter, or I'll read it to you." And ſnatching it from Louiſa, ſhe read as follows:

"MADAM,

"It is now time to lay aſide that modeſt reſerve, which you have hitherto oppoſed to my ad-

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miration, ſince I ſhall, in the moſt clear and explicit terms, lay myſelf and fortune at your feet.

" Charming, as I have ever thought you, I ſhould not, I believe, ſo ſoon have declared myſelf, had not your kind attentions to me, during my confinement, by convincing me of your ſenſibility, vanquiſhed every objection I had, till then, entertained againſt matrimony.

" Sprung from the moſt ancient family in Ireland, allied to all that is noble here, connected with many illuſtrious families on the continent, abundantly endowed with the gifts of fortune, there is no match any where, to which I might not aſpire.

" Yet, I confeſs I find, in your enchanting form, and various accompliſhments, *all* I can deſire: your moderate fortune will ſatisfy me; and I am ready and willing to make ſuch ſettlements upon you, as ſhall *more* than ſatisfy your friends; your own moderation I am acquainted with.

" I am ſtill weak, and the ſubject of this letter might have agitated me too much, had I attempted a perſonal explanation. The moment I am favoured with your anſwer, (the contents of which I agreeably anticipate) I will immediately diſpatch an expreſs to your friend Doctor Sandolph, whoſe concurrence in this meaſure, cannot be doubted;

and

and in the evening, I will haſten to you, that I may, in perſon, aſſure you, my dear Miſs Roſeville, of the paſſionate regard, and fervent adoration of

Your devoted, humble ſervant,

Wimpole-ſtreet, (Friday.) POMPOUSTON."

"Juſt as I thought!" cried Lady Roſeville; "now Louiſa, I ſhall be happy indeed! I ſhall now ſee you, in the moſt brilliant ſituation."

"Indeed, Madam, you will not, if it can only be obtained by ſharing it with Lord Pompouſton."

"Why, the girl is mad to be ſure! It is impoſſible you can refuſe ſo noble an offer—ſit down this moment, and anſwer the letter as you ought."

"Our ideas in this reſpect, differ widely, Madam—in an affair of leſs importance, than the deſtiny of my future life, I ſhould conſider it as my duty to wave my own objections, to pleaſe you; but, ſince it is *my* happineſs that is at ſtake, permit me to anſwer, according to my feelings."

"Not, if they are abſurd, I promiſe you—but come, let me ſee what you think fit to ſay."

Louſa took a pen and wrote,

"MY LORD,

"It is impoſſible I can accept of the honour, you mean to confer upon me—my reſerve has pro-

ceeded from a different motive, than *that* to which you are pleaſed to aſcribe it; and which, I thought, could not have eſcaped your Lordſhip's penetration.

" The only favour, my Lord, I can ever receive from you, will be a diſcontinuance of any particular attentions to me: by your Lordſhip's account, there are numbers of women in all countries, who will be highly gratified in receiving them; but as my ſentiments are very different, I can only be, my Lord,

" Your Lordſhip's

" Obedient humble ſervant,

" LOUISA ROSEVILLE."

Lady Roſeville, who was reading over her ſhoulder, ſnatched the paper out of her hand, and tearing it with great violence to pieces, flung the fragments in her face.

" You audacious wretch!" cried ſhe, almoſt inarticulately with rage, " Is it thus you preſume to anſwer; and can you think, I will ſuffer you to ſend this inſolent ſcrawl?"

" I ſhould," cried Louiſa, confounded at this violence, " have worded my refuſal in ſofter terms, had I not, by experience, been convinced, that it is not very eaſy to daunt Lord Pompouſton. Too long have I been compelled to bear with the

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moſt offenſive aſſiduities from him, without being able to diſcourage them; and the pride, preſumption, and conceit, conſpicuous in every line of his letter, well juſtifies a ſpirited anſwer."

"You have a moſt vixen ſpirit, indeed!" cried Lady Roſeville," but be aſſured I'll tame it—ſit down, and write another letter this minute. Tell him that you think yourſelf highly honoured by his propoſal, and that in a very few days you will ſend him an anſwer. By that time it is to be hoped, you will recover your ſenſes, and eſtimate as you ought, the bleſſing within your reach."

"My ſentiments have not changed, nor cannot change, Madam," ſaid Louiſa; "Lord Pompouſton muſt not be ſuffered to ſuppoſe, I heſitated in ſending him a refuſal."

"You are a perverſe good for nothing girl," cried Lady Roſeville, "write or not, juſt as you pleaſe, I'll trouble myſelf no more about you." And away ſhe flung.

Louiſa, inſtantly wrote to Lord Pompouſton, much as before; for ſhe thought the caſe too urgent to admit of delay; and that her letter might be ſure to reach him, ſhe ſent Marianne with it.

Preſently after Mrs. Lacely came to her, with Lady Roſeville's commands; that Miſs Roſeville ſhould not preſume to ſtir out of her apartment, 'till further orders. "Servants, Ma'am, ſaid ſhe,

" muſt obey their ſuperiors; therefore pray don't take any thing amiſs of me; but indeed, I can't but think as how you ſtand mortally in your own light. What to go for to refuſe ſuch a great Lord, ſuch a handſome man too, and ſo rich! well, Lord bleſs me, I can't think how you can be ſo monſtrous hard hearted! And one who fought for you too, and had *liked* to have been killed upon your account! I proteſt, Ma'am, was I in your place, I would jump at the offer, and I'd tell his Lordſhip, I was much obliged to him: that wou'd be acting ſomething like."

" Have you any further commands," ſaid Louiſa, drily, " to deliver from my mother?"

" No, Ma'am; her Ladyſhip only ſaid, go Lacely, go, tell that obſtinate creature, (excuſe the expreſſion Ma'am, it was my Lady's) tell her I ſay, that ſhe ſhan't ſtir out of her room, nor receive a creature, 'till ſhe knows better her duty to me."

Mrs. Lacely, having received aſſurances of Louiſa's ſubmiſſion to theſe commands, retired.

How many unpleaſant reflections, diſquieted poor Louiſa! Her mother's violence, and impracticable temper; the encreaſing perſecution ſhe was but too certain of enduring now that Lord Pompouſton had avowed his paſſion; not to mention the vexation, with which Lord Dane-

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field's ambiguous conduct had impreſſed her;—all this together overwhelmed her ſpirits, and ſo far from grieving at her confinement, ſhe rather rejoiced, that ſhe might undiſturbed, ponder on her ſituation,

The next morning, as ſhe was ſitting in her dreſſing room, ſomebody rapped at the door; and and upon her opening it, Sir Ralph Random made his appearance. Louiſa received him with cold civility; while he deſired leave to have a few moments converſation with her.

"I am come, Madam," ſaid he, "on a friendly errand, which I have been prevailed on to undertake, to oblige Lady Roſeville. From ſome hints caſually dropped by her, I underſtand you have rejected a propoſal of marriage from Lord Pompouſton: but ſurely, you muſt have acted ſomewhat precipitately, and not duly have reflected on the very great advantages that ſuch an eſtabliſhment offers."

"Indeed, Sir," replied Louiſa, "if your viſit here has no other object, than to diſcuſs this ſubject; (which I have very maturely conſidered) I muſt apprize you, that you cannot chooſe one more diſagreable to me."

"Why ſo? why ſhould it be diſagreeable? you do wrong, very wrong, Miſs Roſeville, to reſiſt your mother's wiſhes; young ladies ſhould

never diſpute the will of their parents; and in the preſent caſe, when your intereſt alone is conſidered, you are doubly to blame. Let me juſt ſtate things fairly to you; and you know I have no particular partiality to Lord Pompouſton. It is a maxim with me always to ſpeak my mind, and never to let people run on, without giving them a gentle check, when I ſee occaſion; ſo that I as often contradict him, as any other perſon. But that's little to the point. This nobleman has at leaſt, twenty thouſand a year; and beſides his preſent rank, he has the proſpect of an Engliſh peerage. Theſe would be great recommendations to any, but a ſentimental lady, who fancies ſhe muſt be in love ere ſhe marries. However, if you would not harden your heart againſt him, his adoration for you is ſuch, as promiſes you all the love and rapture you read of in romance; and then figure to yourſelf the ſhew and ſplendour that will ſurround you with a man of his turn; theſe delight the heart of all your ſex. Conſider too, Miſs Roſeville, that you cannot reaſonably expect to meet again, with ſo many advantages united in the ſame perſon: Therefore, if you repent of your precipitate conduct, avow it honeſtly. I fancy it may yet be remediable; poſſibly by the interpoſition of friends, matters might be ſoftened. Really I ſhould be ſorry that you loſt ſuch a great match;

and

and though I am not very fond of interfering in other people's concerns, yet from friendſhip to Lady Roſeville, and good will to yourſelf, I will ſtretch a point, and undertake to bring Lord Pompouſton hither, if you will promiſe by ſmiles and complacency, to make him amends for the paſt."

"No, indeed;" cried Louiſa warmly, "I will make no ſuch promiſe. Never will I voluntarily receive a viſit from him. My determination in regard to his propoſal, is irrevocably fixed; and I have taken care to let him know it. Therefore, Sir Ralph, it is by no means neceſſary you ſhould break through your own rule on my account; as I ſhall readily diſpenſe with your interference in this affair."

"Lord, Madam! you can't ſuppoſe it is a matter of any conſequence to *me?* If you chooſe to be obſtinate and reject my good offices, the loſs will be your own." And ſlightly bowing as he retired, he added, "I ſhall now go to Lady Roſeville, and make my report." Louiſa made no effort to detain him. A more eloquent reaſoner, than Sir Ralph Random, would have been as unſucceſsful in pleading ſuch a cauſe. She imagined that a grand council was holding below, for ſhe ſaw Lady Bridget Wilford's carriage driving about the ſquare, and ſhe concluded, that the reſult of it, had been a reſolution to try lenient meaſures, becauſe Lady Bridget made her a viſit.

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Her behaviour was cold and ſtately; ſhe forbore to enter upon the topic, which Louiſa apprehended ſhe came to diſcuſs: And, after chatting a few minutes on the weather, and the like ſubjects, ſhe propoſed to her to go down to the drawing-room.

Louiſa, who had not gathered from her converſation, whether ſhe was acquainted with her mother's prohibition, deſired to be excuſed. But Lady Bridget, ſeeming to gueſs her motive ſaid, "Yes, yes; you may; for Lady Roſeville, whom I find you have offended, has conſented, at my requeſt, to forgive you.

You have unfortunately, Miſs Roſeville, been educated by people, who, inſtead of inſpiring you with ſentiments of duty to your mother, have prejudiced you againſt her; and taught you to ſet at defiance, parental authority."

"Indeed, Madam, you miſtake——"

"No, no; I know well enough, what I ſay; however come down, and by your ſubmiſſive deportment, merit your mother's indulgence."

"Is my mother alone?" ſaid Louiſa, heſitating to advance.

"Yes, *Madam*," anſwered Lady Bridget, reddening very much, "I underſtand you: but perſons of diſtinction, ſuch as thoſe of *my* family, are not wont to force their company, where it is not prized as it ought to be."

Louiſa,

Louiſa, had but too much cauſe to know that Lady Bridget attributed to one of her family, a degree of delicacy, to which he was a ſtranger.

She was received by Lady Roſeville, with a ſtiff ungracious air; however, Louiſa determined to ſuppoſe the ſubject of contention given up; ſince, without any conceſſions on her part, ſhe had been releaſed from confinement: With this idea, ſhe made her acknowledgements to her mother; and concluded with ſaying, that ſhe had nothing more at heart, than to ſhew her every mark of duty and affection, in her power.

"And ſo you ought girl;" cried Lady Roſeville; "however, no more fine ſpeeches; prepare for the opera."

Thither the ladies went, and nothing more was ſaid about Lord Pompouſton, who did not appear. Thus was Louiſa relieved from part of her vexations.

The ſudden change of meaſures adopted by Lady Roſeville, had been effectuated by Sir Ralph Random; for after he had reported as he had promiſed, what had paſſed between him and Louiſa, Lady Roſeville exceſſively enraged, proteſted that her daughter ſhould never have a moment's peace, till ſhe conſented to be Lady Pompouſton.

"This would be mighty well," cried Sir Ralph, "had you the means of enforcing your

your authority; but it is cramped; the old parſon may ſtep in between you; and he and his ward together, may apply to Chancery for protection. What will you do then? Beſides too, you know well enough that perſecution will only ſtimulate your daughter to oppoſition; for ſuch is the nature of your ſex. Let her alone therefore. Let Lady Bridget, take upon herſelf the office of mediatrix; by this means, Miſs Roſeville will fancy herſelf obliged to her, and cannot in decency refuſe to reſume her former intimacy in the family. She will occaſionally meet with Lord Pompouſton; by a little art, other lovers may be kept aloof; none at preſent are to be apprehended; and time and perſeverance (if his Lordſhip is not a very clumſy fellow indeed) will certainly enſure him victory."

Lady Roſeville, who was not without apprehenſions herſelf, that Louiſa might apply for protection to Doctor Sandolph, had conſented to embrace Sir Ralph's ſcheme; and Lady Bridget Willford, at her deſire, after making no ſmall merit of her condeſcenſion, had performed the taſk aſſigned her.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOUISA, now reſtored to ſociety, enjoyed ſome tranquillity, owing to the abſence of her deteſted lover, who was gone into the country for the benefit of his health, and to conceal the chagrin, occaſioned by his diſappointment.

When Mrs. Raby, whom ſhe had not ſeen ſince the commencement of her troubles, called upon her, and after kindly chiding her for her late neglect, ſaid with a gay air, "Do you know I am juſt come from a wedding? and what will ſurprize you, Lord Danefield was of the party."

"I did not know," ſaid Louiſa, with a faultering voice, "I did not know that his marriage was ſo ſoon to have taken place."

"I did not tell you, he was married;" returned Mrs. Raby, "he acted the part of father, on this occaſion."

"Of father! to whom?

"To a natural daughter of the late Lord Danefield—His behaviour has (if poſſible) raiſed him in my opinion; perhaps," added ſhe with a ſmile, "when I have related the circumſtance, he may gain a lit——tle in yours. His father, by an unpardonable negligence, omitted to make any proviſion for this girl, to whom he had given an expenſive

expenſive education; and had ſupported as his daughter; tho' privately, and without allowing her to bear his name—After his death poor Lucy———"

"Lucy! is her name, Lucy?"

"Yes; but why this ſurprize?"

"It is of no conſequence—Go on, my dear Mrs. Raby."

"Well then, Lucy, as I was ſaying, was left without a ſhilling, and forced to engage herſelf as a journey-woman to a chamber milliner, for ſubſiſtence. In this ſituation, ſhe conducted herſelf with the greateſt diſcretion, refuſing to ſee a young officer, who, in the days of her proſperity, had conceived a violent paſſion for her, and to whom ſhe was tenderly attached; but, as ſhe knew, he could not afford to marry her, ſhe broke off all acquaintance with him, though he repeatedly aſſured her (through Madame de Vaux, the milliner) that the whole happineſs of his life depended upon his receiving that hand, the value of which, no change of circumſtances could diminiſh; and that, poor as he was, he had rather marry her, and live in the humbleſt ſtyle, than be united to the richeſt woman on earth.

Lucy, however, continued inflexible; the more generous her lover appeared, the more ſhe was determined, not to be the cauſe of his ruin. Things

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were in this ſituation, when Lord Danefield, in a converſation which he had ſome weeks ſince, with one of his father's old domeſtics, firſt heard of Lucy, and her misfortunes. Touched with compaſſion, he enquired where ſhe could be found; and haſtened immediately to Madame de Vaux, in Duke-ſtreet, where he made himſelf known to Lucy. He was charmed with her appearance, and now felt as much diſpoſed to ſerve her from inclination, as he had before, from the mere dictates of humanity. The amiable character Madame de Vaux gave her, with the little incident of her attachment, intereſted him ſo warmly for her, that without hinting to her his deſign, he went to Lord Melvern, and pleaded ſo earneſtly in behalf of young Stanford, (Lucy's lover) that his guardian undertook to procure him a company, which intelligence, Lord Danefield went himſelf, and imparted to him; and then conducted him to Lucy, who, upon ſeeing her lover ſo unexpectedly, fainted away.

Lord Danefield now reproached himſelf, for not having prepared her for this viſit; but he was not long uneaſy about her; ſhe ſoon recovered; and he enjoyed the ſatisfaction of ſeeing two amiable people, perfectly happy, and of receiving their grateful acknowledgments. As he is under age, he has it not in his power to do much for them at

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preſent; his generous diſpoſition, however, could not be content without doing ſomething; and a friend, ſeeing his embaraſſment, offered to advance him a thouſand pounds, the ſum he wiſhed to preſent to Lucy.

Yeſterday Mr. Stanford received his commiſſion; and this morning, Lucy's hand, and her little fortune, from Lord Danefield. Melcomb has lent the new married couple his houſe in Hertfordſhire, till they can accommodate themſelves with convenient lodgings in town.

I never heard a word of this affair, till a few days ſince, when my brother obtained Lord Danefield's permiſſion to communicate it to me. As I knew my noticing Lucy, would be highly agreeable to him, I called upon her, and was ſo much delighted with her beauty and modeſty, that I invited her to Hill-ſtreet; and afterwards offered, as I ſaw it would pleaſe her, to be preſent at her wedding—and you cannot think what a pretty woman ſhe is."

"Oh! but I can, for I have ſeen her twice, and well marked her features."

Louiſa, perceiving Mrs. Raby's aſtoniſhment, related the circumſtances already mentioned, only omitting her own ſenſations upon the occaſion, which, nevertheleſs, did not eſcape from Mrs. Raby's ſuſpicions.

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The languor and dejection of Louiſa's ſpirits, now ſubſided. Lord Danefield, to whom ſhe had been ſo unjuſt, was re-inſtated in her good opinion: her partiality was much ſtrengthened, by the knowledge of his noble diſpoſition, and to reſiſt its daily encroachments on her heart, ſhe found it neceſſary to dwell upon the idea of his engagement to Lady Almeria.

The ſpring was far advanced; Louiſa being an early riſer, was ſometimes tempted to accompany Mrs. Raby's little children, in their morning walk, in Kenſington Gardens, whither they were conducted by their nurſe, in her lady's carriage. By going at ſuch an unfaſhionable hour, Louiſa was ſure to eſcape the ſtare of the fine world, and almoſt to enjoy retirement, for the gardens were at that time nearly empty. Thus fortifying herſelf by air and exerciſe, ſhe was enabled to go through the fatigues of the day: the innocent prattle of the children, diverted her from reflections too apt to recur, and never with greater force, than amidſt lawns and groves, juſt recovered from the torpid touch of winter, and ſeeming to contend, which ſhould moſt delight the ſenſes.

In one of theſe ſtrolls, little Frank Raby, a ſweet playful child, had, in running wildly along, hurt his foot againſt the ſtump of a tree; he was a particular favourite with Louiſa; ſhe was tender-

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derly ſtooping to comfort him, and drying his eyes with her handkerchief, when a voice, which ſhe could never hear without emotion, exclaimed, "Who would not ſuffer pain, to be thus conſoled! Ah! happy little Frank!"

Louiſa haſtily roſe—mutual civilities now paſſed between her and Lord Danefield; and though ſhe ſtood ſtill, that he might not attempt to walk with her, ſhe could not regard him with that coldneſs ſhe had done, when they had met laſt. He ſeemed diſpoſed to be guided by her motions; as ſhe choſe to ſtand ſtill, he did the ſame. "I have often thought, Miſs Roſeville," ſaid he, "that ſome how or other, (unintentionally, I am ſure, it muſt have been) I have had the misfortune to diſpleaſe you—there was a pointed ſeverity in your manner, and a coldneſs in your aſpect, the laſt time I had the honour of ſeeing you, that has deeply mortified me."

Louiſa, too ſenſible of the truth of this remark, yet, not daring to explain the cauſe, was greatly embaraſſed; at laſt ſhe ſaid, heſitatingly, "Indeed, my Lord, I—I entertain no unfavourable opinion of you; I gratefully remember your humanity to me, and a circumſtance of your conduct, that I have lately heard, muſt entitle you to general applauſe."

"If I can, in any ſhape, Madam, deſerve your appro-

approbation, believe me, *that* will ſufficiently gratify me. I take not the leaſt merit to myſelf, for the ſlight ſervice I had the good fortune to render you; for, I believe, there is ſcarcely a man alive, who would have acted otherwiſe: and, if you allude to the part, I had in promoting the union of two amiable young people, I muſt aſſure you, I only conſidered myſelf as repreſenting my father: he would, probably, (had not his mind been overpowered with a variety of griefs) have acted ſtill kinder to her, whom I ſhall ever call my ſiſter; and indeed, in acting properly by her, I gratified myſelf."

"I am ſure you did," ſaid Louiſa, eagerly; "but how few there are, that find their own gratification in the happineſs of others, or that would thus delicately have made retribution even for a parent!"

And, with a graceful courteſey, ſhe made a motion to go; but Lord Danefield, whoſe eyes ſparkled with delight, to be thus praiſed by her, could not conſent to quit her. "You will permit me, Madam," ſaid he, "to ſee you ſafe to your carriage."

And he attended her to the door. At the inſtant that the porter opened it, two ladies appeared; one of them bruſhed haughtily by Louiſa, ſaying to her companion, "I don't know her indeed."

deed." And Louiſa, recollecting the face of Lady Almeria Melvern, her cheek was inſtantaneouſly tinged with a deeper hue, and Lord Danefield's with one infinitely more pallid.

"I believe," ſaid Lady Almeria, with a contemptuous ſmile, which extended to both, "Your Lordſhip did not expect to ſee me; I thought you diſliked walking."——Lord Danefield ſtammered out ſomething, not intelligible to Louiſa, who quickened her ſtep acroſs the green;—he, however, overtook her; while ſhe, confuſed and embaraſſed at his joining her, ſaid, "I believe, my Lord, I ſee Mrs. Raby's carriage; the ſervant can't be far off, therefore I beg your Lordſhip will return to the garden."

"That is quite impoſſible; I muſt find your ſervant. How incapable am I, Miſs Roſeville, of reliſhing any ſociety, after having ſeen, and converſed with you!"

"I muſt, however, deſire that you will leave me, for fear that I ſhould give too much credit to your flattery; beſides too, my Lord, your own good ſenſe muſt point out the impropriety of any particular attentions to me."

"For Heaven's ſake, do not drive me away; there can be no impropriety in my ſhewing you a common act of civility."

"Your perſeverance, Lord Danefield, diſtreſſes me;

me, and I perceive that you will (averſe as I may be) compel me to renounce your acquaintance."

"And could you be ſo cruel? It is barbarous even to have ſuch an idea; haſten to ſay that you abjure it." The carriage drawing up, Louiſa made no anſwer, but ſhe faintly ſmiled, as he aſſiſted her into it, and afterwards ſhe obſerved him walking towards town with a very melancholy air.

She could not heartily lament her caſual meeting with him, though it was very deſtructive to her plan of indifference; as ſhe had a thouſand times regretted her harſh behaviour during his ſuppoſed unworthineſs, and longed to make him ſome reparation: but, to meet Lady Almeria ſo critically, ſhe thought moſt unfortunate; for if ſhe already entertained any jealouſy, which the affair of the duel might have excited, this *rencontre* could not fail of confirming it. Her pride (of which ſhe had no inconſiderable ſhare) was mortified, at the poſſibility of being ſuſpected of a clandeſtine meeting, with a man engaged to another. "Would to God!" cried ſhe, mentally, "that they were married! I could not for a moment think of Lord Danefield, as Lady Almeria's; but now, that he ſeems unwilling to confirm an engagement, which he did not himſelf contract; that I perceive what he ſuffers from his attachment to me. Ah! can I help ſympathizing with him! What do I ſay?"

reſumed ſhe, " how fallacious the plea, that I cannot *help* doing a wrong thing! By ſuch ſophiſtry, there is ſcarcely any bad action that might not be extenuated. I muſt then reſolve to conquer this weakneſs, and ſucceſs will probably attend the reſolution."

When Louiſa got home, ſhe found in the drawing-room with her mother, a mean looking man, with a very dark complexion, and a little tight black wig, without any powder. At the ſight of this figure, Louiſa was retreating, which Lady Roſeville perceiving, detained her. " Step down ſtairs a moment, Mr. Ephraim;" ſaid ſhe, " and I'll ſend for you preſently."

The man obeyed—and Lady Roſeville, turning to her daughter, ſaid, " I am in an ugly ſcrape, Louiſa—Mr. Taſtey, the upholſterer, claims a promiſe I made him, of paying two hundred pounds down, upon getting into this houſe; and ſeveral other of my tradeſpeople are very troubleſome to me daily. Now, I have been thinking, my dear girl, that you could be of great uſe to me, and I have no doubt but that you will. I don't aſk you to lend me money, as you ſay you have none; but why can't you let me raiſe ſome upon your jewels? The few I have, long ago went upon this errand, and it wou'd be but kind of you, to let yours do the ſame. Nobody need know it; a

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ſet of paſte will look juſt as well; and I aſſure you, it is no uncommon practice among people of faſhion to ſubſtitute paſte for diamonds."

Louiſa confounded, ſtood ſilent and motionleſs.

"You cannot ſurely, refuſe to oblige me?" "ſaid Lady Roſeville; ſo go my dear and fetch them; I promiſe you, they ſhall be in very ſafe hands."

Still Louiſa did not ſtir; ſuch a propoſition, even from Lady Roſeville, amazed her; and ſince it was made with ſo little ceremony, ſhe heſitated the leſs, in rejecting it. The jewels were of conſiderable value; had been given her by her grandmother, and ſhould ſhe part with them, ſhe was very ready to credit, that the hands into which they would paſs, would indeed ſecure them from returning into hers, at leaſt with their intrinſic value, ſince paſte might be ſubſtituted for diamonds. Perceiving Lady Roſeville's impatience for an anſwer, ſhe ſaid, "you will excuſe me, Madam, if I conſult Doctor Sandolph, and ſhould he not diſapprove of this meaſure, I ſhall not object to it."

"Conſult a fiddle ſtick!" cried Lady Roſeville, biting her lip, and turning ſcarlet with anger, "I ſay conſult, indeed! But, I charge you, upon no account, on pain of incurring my ſevereſt diſpleaſure, to hint a word of this, to that old fellow.

I wonder how you could think of ſuch a thing:—conſult him, truly!"

"Then, Madam, I muſt frankly tell you, I never can take any ſtep of conſequence without his advice; for I cannot forget the confidence my grandmother repoſed in him; beſides too, in the relation in which he ſtands to me by her will, he has a right to be conſulted. But, if your exigencies require an immediate ſupply, and you will favour me with the acceptance of another 100l. I have it at your ſervice."

"Such a trifle will be of little uſe," returned Lady Roſeville; "but I ſhall take it: however, the jewels would have fetched a great deal more, and I wiſh you would relent, and let Mr. Ephraim take them; I give you my honour I will very ſhortly redeem them."

Louiſa could not refrain from ſaying very drily, "They cannot go, Madam, but upon the condition I have already mentioned."

"Name it not—I do believe there does not exiſt in the world, ſuch another girl as yourſelf! ſo cold! ſo unfeeling! ſo prematurely prudent! but fetch the money; I will try my luck at the Faro table, at Lady Daſhaway's to-night."

This ſpeech did not contribute to reconcile Louiſa, chearfully to diminiſh her ſmall reſerved pittance; it had already been much reduced, by her

her kindneſs to the Brent family (the people whom ſhe had met in the Park), and by ſome other charities. The little Brents had been clothed, a weekly ſtipend allowed to the old grandmother, and the lame boy got into the infirmary. Mrs. Raby had wiſhed to have ſolely defrayed theſe expences, but Louiſa delighted too much in benevolent actions not to inſiſt upon ſharing in them.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOUISA's ſituation daily became more irkſome to her; which cannot be doubted, after what has been related of Lady Roſeville's proceedings. Amidſt all her foibles, had ſhe diſcovered a ſmall portion of maternal tenderneſs, or a diſpoſition capable of any but ſelfiſh feelings, Louiſa would have found ſome conſolation; but to live with a perſon, on whom attentions were loſt; to whom delicacy was unknown; who, by unkind uſage, perpetually chilled the warmth and affection of her heart, was very unpleaſant. And that ſhe ſhould thus ſuffer from a parent, and be under the ſad neceſſity of withholding her eſteem and confidence from *her*, aggravated her misfortune.

Lady Roſeville, ſeemed to derive little ſatisfaction from her daughter's ſociety; otherwiſe, than as conducing to reflect credit on herſelf. Her deſire of procuring for her ſome brilliant eſtabliſhment, became daily more inordinate: diſappointed in her darling project of uniting her to Lord Pompouſton; almoſt deſpairing of ſucceſs in the ſcheme ſhe had concerted with Sir Ralph; ſhe was conſtantly on the watch, conſidering what young men might beſt ſuit her views; how far they might ſuit

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with Louiſa's, was a matter, on which ſhe did not deign to reflect. To an indifferent ſpectator it was far from unentertaining, to obſerve her *manœuvres*, though they were torture to poor Louiſa's pride and delicacy.

No ſooner had Lady Roſeville marked any young man of diſtinguiſhed rank and fortune, than ſhe had recourſe to all ſorts of methods to procure his acquaintance. Next, ſhe allured him to her houſe, where he found play, and a mixture of people chiefly of a gay, and not very ſcrupulous turn: then followed a variety of ſchemes, to inſinuate herſelf into his favour, to fix his attention upon Louiſa's beauty and accompliſhments, and to prevent its being drawn off by the attraction of others.

Since ſhe had ſettled in Portman-ſquare, ſhe had encreaſed her acquaintance; and conſequently, her eſtabliſhment, which was now on a very elegant and expenſive ſcale. All the ſuggeſtions of prudence were diſregarded; ſhould it become neceſſary to retrench, it might eaſily be done, when once Louiſa was eſtabliſhed; but at preſent, nothing was ſo material in her opinion, as to appear on a *certain footing*.

Charming however as was Louiſa, ſhe had fewer admirers, than might have been expected. Some men either dreaded a connection with Lady Roſe-

ville, or were diſguſted with her advances. Others, did not care to encounter Lord Pompouſton, who ſtill maintained his pretenſions, and arrogantly defied all rivals. Some, who heard that her underſtanding was uncommonly refined and cultivated, had very cogent reaſons for avoiding an union, with what they denominated a learned woman; and thoſe who had no ſuch reaſons, were not ſufficiently acquainted with her, to be certain that no latent pride or conceit, tarniſhed the luſtre of her attainments. While ſeveral, who felt the force of her attractions, from a modeſt diffidence of their own merit, ſcarcely thought themſelves conſiderable enough, to pretend to a woman who had, added to her beauty and talents, a plentiful fortune.

The Roſeville eſtate, which was very conſiderable, (being entailed) had at her father's death, devolved on Sir Charles Roſeville, his couſin; all but one eſtate in Kent, of about ſeven hundred pounds per annum. This he had bequeathed to his daughter: a very good houſe and paddock belonged to it. Its ſituation was charming, in a rich vale; the ground on which the houſe was placed, gently ſwelling, with the Medway in a clear broad ſtream waſhing its banks; cherry-orchards on one ſide, beautiful meadows on the other; and a deep ſcreen of wood which protected it on the North.

Large

Large as were the eſtates that deſcended to Sir Charles, he never ceaſed to regret that this had not been of the number; not from a deſire of accumulating wealth, for he would without reluctance have exchanged for it one of infinitely more value; but this envied ſpot, had been for many ages in the Temple family; the name and eſtate of Roſeville, being only a late acquiſition, which had fallen to the Temples, by the failure of the male line in the Roſeville family: he grieved, that by paſſing to a female, it would now be ſunk in ſome other; perhaps ſold to ſome perſon, who, regardleſs of its beauties, would mercileſsly cut down its venerable groves, diſmantle its gay orchards, and plough up its velvet lawns.

The arrears of this eſtate, had accumulated during fifteen years to a conſiderable ſum, and had been placed in the funds; no part thereof having been appropriated to the uſe of the minor, as Sir Edward's mother had taken upon herſelf, from the time of his death, the ſole charge of maintaining, and educating his daughter; and had beſides, out of her jointure, ſaved five thouſand pounds, which with the family jewels, ſhe had bequeathed to her darling Louiſa.

As for Sir Charles, he had not been on cordial terms with the late Lady Roſeville; indeed, her reſidence abroad, had prevented their meeting for

many years before her deceaſe. In his youth, he had lived in habits of ſtrict intimacy with his couſin Edward; but greatly diſapproving his marriage, inſenſibly he had detached himſelf from him, and ſince his death, he had never deigned to take the leaſt notice of his widow; and probably his diſlike of her, had occaſioned the diſregard he ſhewed Louiſa, who had with due reſpect, written to him on her grandmother's death, and received a few lines of condolence in anſwer; ſince which, though he knew of her arrival in England, he had never noticed her.

The only pleaſant circumſtance, on which Louiſa's mind delighted to dwell, was the promiſed arrival of Doctor Sandolph, which ſhe had reaſon daily to expect: without entering at large in her letters upon her uncomfortable ſituation, ſhe had not concealed from him, that there were ſtrong objections to it. She knew, that he would diſapprove of the inceſſant diſſipation in which ſhe was compelled to engage; and that he would be ſtill more diſſatisfied, with the ſociety in which ſhe lived: now, that ſhe had been long enough in London, to form a pretty exact gueſs of their real characters, ſhe bluſhed to find, that not a few of them were denied the countenance of the world;—to be confounded amidſt ſuch people, and to ſee a ſmile or a wink, whenever

ever Sir Ralph Random appeared in her mother's train, were mortifications, at which her whole ſoul revolted! Play, ſeemed the oſtenſible occupation of moſt of Lady Roſeville's friends; and of late ſhe had adopted it for hers. The magnetic virtues of the Faro table, attracted her every evening; yet ſhe found time to fly to public places, and Louiſa, with reluctance, was obliged to attend her; not that ſhe would have objected to have frequented theſe gay ſcenes occaſionally, in reſpectable company, but that was not the caſe. Generally, to paſs the firſt part of every evening in a crowd; and the concluding part of it, to ſit ſolitarily in a corner, or by the ſide of ſome yawning companion, who like herſelf was condemned to wait the breaking up of the Faro table, was a cruel waſte of health and ſpirits, and ſuch as was unnatural in a parent to exact.

It was however Louiſa's fixed reſolve, to conſult with Doctor Sandolph, how ſhe might mend her ſituation; totally to emancipate herſelf ſeemed impoſſible, not only from the oppoſition ſhe might expect from Lady Roſeville, but ſtill more from the goodneſs of her own diſpoſition, which rendered her averſe to any unkind meaſure, and particularly to one, that would ſo ſtrongly confirm the opinion already entertained, but too generally, of Lady Roſeville's demerit. This, certainly was

a very delicate matter, and required the matureſt deliberation.

Great as her intimacy was with Mrs. Raby, ſhe had never hinted any thing that could reflect upon her mother's conduct; for Louiſa thought, that though it was poſſible the failings of a parent might be ſuch as to render her houſe an improper reſidence, nothing could juſtify a daughter's publication of them. Reſpectfully therefore, and with a delicacy peculiar to herſelf, ſhe caſt a veil over them; which ſhe determined never to draw aſide, but to her venerable friend Doctor Sandolph, who was entitled to her unreſerved confidence, and from whoſe wiſdom and experience, ſhe might hope to receive ſalutary counſel.

But, with reſpect to the circumſtances of her education and reſidence with her grandmother, ſhe ſaw no occaſion for reſerve; and thus ſhe communicated them in converſation to Mrs. Raby.

"The great veneration my father entertained for his mother's ſuperior excellencies, added to ſome unfortunate miſunderſtanding that fell out between him and my mother, determined him to place me, at his deceaſe, under the late Lady Roſeville's care. I had the misfortune to loſe my father, when I was no more than four years old; my grandmother, who lived abroad on account of her health, which ſhe never enjoyed in England, came

came to Dover to fetch me, and thither I was carried, with my nurſe, by good Doctor Sandolph, who was one of my father's beſt friends; and who had accompanied him in a tour through Europe, juſt before he died."

"Your mother," interrupted Mrs. Raby, "muſt have been exceedingly hurt at parting with you."

"I ſuppoſe ſhe was, though I have been told that ſhe was ſtill more diſpleaſed at my being taken from her; and ſhe retains much reſentment againſt my grandmother's memory. But to proceed;—my infancy paſſed moſt happily under the care of that admirable woman, who ſpared neither pains nor expence in my education. The object of it, was more the cultivation of my mind, than the attainment of ſhewy accompliſhments; perhaps theſe, were leſs eſtimated than they merit, at leaſt according to the ſentiments of many of thoſe ladies I have ſeen here, who ſeem to attend ſolely to them, while their minds remain quite uninformed. You, my dear Emily, have found means to unite brilliant talents, to much elegant knowledge.

'Till I was twelve years old, we reſided entirely in the South of France; but afterwards my grandmother, whoſe health ſeemed leſs delicate as ſhe advanced in years, took up her reſidence in the

ſummer

ſummer at Chaillot, that I might have the benefit of maſters from Paris; and in the winter, ſhe uſed to leave me in the *Abbaïe de Panthremont*, while ſhe ſought, in a milder climate than the vicinity of Paris, an aſylum againſt the cold, which greatly affected her limbs.

In purſuance of Lady Roſeville's plan, ſhe prevailed on *M. de Sobrin*, a very reſpectable *Abbé*, to paſs a portion of every ſummer with us, and to aſſiſt in developing the faculties of my mind. To that worthy man, I am indebted for ſome little knowledge of the *belles lettres*, of hiſtory, geography, &c. As to the principles of virtue and religion, they were recommended to me more by example, than precept; for the tenor of Lady Roſeville's whole life, was a practical courſe of morality; and ſhe was ſo much loved and admired, that it was natural to wiſh to reſemble her.

In the early part of laſt ſummer, we made an excurſion to Spa, the waters having been ſtrongly recommended to her. As you know how pleaſing novelty is to young people, you will eaſily imagine, I was delighted with this jaunt. Beſides the amuſements of the place, of which I moderately partook, I was much entertained by ſeeing people from every part of Europe, who daily reſorted thither, as much for the ſake of diſſipation, as on the ſcore of health.

The

The adjacent country is extremely romantic; wild, mountainous, and in ſome parts woody. I took infinite pleaſure in rambling about early in the morning, accompanied by Marianne. Often I climbed the mountains to inhale the pure air, impregnated with the fragrance of thyme, and heath bloſſoms.

In one of theſe ſtrolls, a beautiful little boy of about four years old, caught my attention; he was ſitting on the ground half naked, with ſuch a piteous look of woe on his infantine figure, that I could not reſiſt ſtopping to ſpeak to him. Upon enquiring what was the matter with him, and where he lived; he ſaid, "I did live in a cottage hard by, but mother ſays, we can live no where now, for our hut is burnt; all, every thing burnt by fire, and my wheel-barrow too!"

"And where is your mother?" ſaid I, ſcarcely refraining from a ſmile, at the loſs of the wheel-barrow.

"Gone down into the town," ſaid he, "to buy a loaf, and the little ones lie upon ſome ſtraw under a buſh; and *Mimi* chid me, becauſe I was hungry and cried. So I left her, and came here."

"Who is *Mimi?*"

"'Tis ſiſter; ſhe looks after *Pierrot*, *Babette*, and *Joſeph*."

I made the little boy conduct me to his brothers and

and ſiſters, and I found the poor little wretches almoſt naked, and half ſtarved. I left a trifle with *Mimi* for their preſent ſupport, and determined to mention their caſe to my grandmother, whoſe benevolent diſpoſition I knew, would rejoice in an opportunity of exerciſing itſelf, in behalf of this family. In deſcending a very narrow path on the hill, a middle aged man of a moſt noble aſpect, ſtood aſide, to let me paſs. I acknowledged his politeneſs by a courteſy, and proceeded home.

This ſtranger, I had noticed before, for there was ſomething very ſtriking in his appearance; however, I ſhould ſcarcely have mentioned this, had not the knowledge of his character afterwards, rendered nothing unintereſting to me, that regarded the commencement of our acquaintance.

I had no difficulty to procure from my grandmother, ſome aſſiſtance for the diſtreſſed mountaineers; the next morning when I carried it to them, I was ſurprized at the change I found in their countenances; *Claude*, (my firſt acquaintance) was ſinging; the mother was amongſt them knitting, a child aſleep upon her knee; and the eldeſt girl attending a pot, that was boiling over a fire kindled upon the heath; the reſt were playing at a diſtance, and all of them were clothed.

"This is the ſweet good lady!" cried *Claude*, as ſoon as he ſaw me; "here ſhe is! here ſhe comes!"

And

And he ran before me, jumping and hallooing to announce this event. The mother roſe; the traces of ſorrow were ſtill viſible on her pallid cheek.

I gave her my grandmother's bounty. "Ah! Madam," ſaid ſhe, "how good God has been to me! I thought I had been forſaken of the whole world, and ſhould have periſhed here with my poor infants, but the bleſſed Virgin ſent you, and the noble gentleman to ſerve me. It is now two years ſince my huſband died. God reſt his ſoul! for a good huſband he was to me, and a kind father to theſe poor babes; though he never ſaw poor *Pierrot*, (pointing to the infant on her lap) for he was born ſome months after his death. I contrived however, by riſing early, and going late to reſt, with the help of *Mimi*, both of us working very hard, to pick up enough juſt to keep us from ſtarving; but about a week ago, there was a violent ſtorm in the dead of the night; tired with the fatigue of the day, I was ſo heavy with ſleep, that I did not hear the thunder growling over our heads; the children's ſcreams awakened me, (poor things they had good cauſe to ſcream!) the lightning had fallen upon the thatch of my little hut. Oh! bleſſed God! how I was frightened, when I ſaw the fire blazing around. A burning brand had fallen upon the children's mattraſs, and already

already the flames began to ſcorch them. Hardly knowing what I did, I dragged them out; and the moment after, crack went the roof, and in it tumbled! Not a ſingle thing, not a rag could I ſave. Some charitable Chriſtians, who live a little way off upon the heath, lent us ſome trifles, otherwiſe we ſhould have been quite naked; they could not however, give us ſhelter; we are too large a family; but yeſterday was a lucky day indeed! for beſide your kind bounty, that great *Monſieur*, with the fine ſtar, who often walks this way, came and bid me not cry, but get people to build up my hut again, and he would pay for it; and then ſoon after he ſent us a parcel of clothes; and ſee, Madam, what a purſe full of money he has given me. God forgive my telling you this, for he made me promiſe I would mention it to nobody! but you too are our friend, Madam, and ſo I hope I have done no great harm. Heaven bleſs you both! I never ſaw ſo much money in my life before."

The poor woman's joy had made her ſo loquacious, that ſhe detained me ſome time, to hear a detail of the manner in which ſhe ſhould diſpoſe of her riches. In my way back, I met the great *Monſieur*, as ſhe called him, and I regarded him with encreaſed reſpect. I cannot expreſs the impreſſion he made upon me; there was a ſomething

in

in his countenance, which I ſeemed to ſee, when his figure was no longer before me. I felt ſorry I was unacquainted with him, and my eye involuntarily turned to look after him. I believe his, had done the ſame in regard to me, otherwiſe he would not have perceived, that by miſſing my ſtep, I was rolling down the ſteepeſt part of the mountain, and was dragging Marianne after me. Inſtantly he flew towards me, and catching hold of my gown, ſaved me; and then he offered me his arm. It was done with ſuch good grace, that I accepted it, and he ſaw me ſafe to the bottom.

Thus was our acquaintance commenced—an acquaintance, that has occaſioned me ſome very happy, and ſome miſerable moments. Alas! I little thought how ſhort its duration would be!

This gentleman was a Ruſſian of great rank and fortune; his name Prince *Ormanzoff*. He appeared about forty; had the fineſt figure I ever beheld; charming eyes, and beautiful teeth. But what ſignifies mentioning his perſon, when he had ſo many ſuperior perfections! He had ſpent little of his time in Ruſſia, but had devoted moſt of it to travelling. I never knew any perſon, whoſe mind was ſo highly poliſhed; yet he was not in the leaſt pedantic; but his thoughts and words ſeemed to flow with ſuch elegance, and with ſuch eaſe of expreſſion, that one ſeemed aſtoniſhed the ſame ideas

ideas had not occurred to oneſelf; and that if they had, one ſhould not have thought of the ſame happy terms.

Moſt of the modern languages of Europe were equally familar to him. He had a taſte for all the fine arts, particularly for muſic; he had ſome excellent muſicians in his *ſuite*; and he performed on ſeveral inſtruments, almoſt with the ſkill of a profeſſor.

After our caſual meeting on the mountain, Prince *Ormanzoff* viſited my grandmother. She was ſo much charmed with the benevolence of his diſpoſition, and with the ſtyle of his converſation, that ſhe gave him a general invitation to her houſe, of which he often availed himſelf.

He uſed frequently to read to us, and we took pleaſure in liſtening to his remarks and criticiſms; and finding my knowledge of Italian imperfect, he offered to read with me *Davila*, and afterwards *Guicciardini*, which I gladly acceded to. Several muſical people being at that time at Spa, the Prince often contrived to form a little concert, which generally was held at our houſe.

Thus agreeably and profitably employed, did ſome weeks ſweetly glide away, our Ruſſian friend making a rapid progreſs in our eſteem; his behaviour was always uniformly polite and attentive, without

without any of that frivolous unmeaning gallantry, which I had often diſliked in other men."

Mrs. Raby now interrupted her with an expreſſive ſmile; "yes, yes," ſaid ſhe, "I can readily believe you diſtinguiſhed his attentions from all others. You certainly were in love with this Ruſſian Prince; I thought ſo from the firſt."

"Not in the leaſt; I aſſure you, you are miſtaken. I eſteemed him, becauſe he deſerved it; and I preferred his converſation to that of others, becauſe he was more agreeable; but I had no paſſion for him, no uneaſineſs when he was abſent, no exceſſive joy when he returned. I ſhould have ſeen him married without a pang. I think, had my father lived, I ſhould have felt much the ſame for him, as I did for Prince *Ormanzoff*, though probably ſtill more, as filial affection muſt be ſtronger than any ſentiment of friendſhip; beſides too, it would have been ſtrengthened by habit. But, alas! my regard for my Ruſſian friend was nipped in the bud by his untimely end.

My grandmother one day obſerving to him, that although his countrymen were ſuppoſed to have a particular facility in acquiring languages, he muſt have lived a long while in England, to ſpeak ours ſo perfectly. He ſaid it was true; that he had finiſhed his education in an Engliſh univerſity, having been above two years at Cambridge.

"I wonder

"I wonder," ſaid ſhe, "you never mentioned this before."

"Ah, Madam!" ſaid the Prince, with a deep ſigh, "'tis a period of my life, that I never like to remember; not that I did not experience in England, every pleaſure that the beauty of the country, and that the urbanity and refinements of its inhabitants, could give.—But——to myſelf alone I impute the dark ſhade with which that period is marked in my mind; nor has the progreſs of time, the courſe of travelling I have unremittingly purſued, nor yet the ſcenes of amuſement and diſſipation, in which I have occaſionally engaged, been able to obliterate this from my memory."

The alteration in his voice and manner, while he ſpake, ſtruck us both very much; and from that time we carefully avoided renewing the ſubject; but we obſerved, that it had left an impreſſion of ſadneſs upon him, that did not wear off for ſeveral days—and ſoon after the Prince was—"

The arrival of Lady Roſeville, who came to fetch Louiſa, interrupted her diſcourſe, and the two friends reluctantly ſeparated.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XV.

LADY Roſeville had an unſual air of thoughtfulneſs; ſhe ſeemed to have been vexed; but not diſpoſed to let the *contre coup* fall upon her daughter, whom ſhe addreſſed as ſoon as they met, with unaccuſtomed kindneſs; ſhe ſeemed to have ſomething to impart, and to be a little embaraſſed how ſhe ſhould ſet about it; at laſt ſhe ſaid,

"You can, my dear Louiſa, do me a great ſervice; and let me, my ſweet girl," added ſhe, taking her hand, "hope that you will do it chearfully. Send then to Bangrove, and try if you can prevail upon him, to lend you a little money—any attempt I could make to borrow of him, would be ineffectual; indeed, we are upon ſuch ill terms together, that I ſhould not care to try; but perhaps, as you will be of age in about a year and a half, he would not ſcruple to take your bond, and you muſt carefully conceal from him, that I put you upon this, for then I know he would be inexorable."

Louiſa heard this requeſt with much diſſatisfaction; though of a noble generous diſpoſition, it was totally exempt from that ſort of weakneſs, which leads ſo many into ſilly and improper actions, becauſe they know not how to refuſe. Her mother,

ther, with what was allowed for her maintenance, had an income which might have ſupported her very comfortably; yet ſhe was in perpetual diſtreſs; never paid a bill; and when ſhe was deep in one tradeſman's books, ſhe immediately left him off, and employed another. To ſupply her therefore with money, was only a laviſh prodigality, that could be attended with no real benefit to herſelf, for Louiſa knew it would go to the Faro table, whither the other ſums ſhe had before given her, had already gone. The ſtrict principles which Louiſa had imbibed at her grandmother's, made her averſe to the thoughts of taking up money; and if ſhe parted with the trifle ſhe had left, ſhe would be deprived for a coſiderable time, of the means of alleviating real, and undeſerved diſtreſs.

While ſhe was making theſe reflections, Lady Roſeville exclaimed, "Good God! what can you be meditating about! You can't ſurely be ſo ill-natured as to refuſe borrowing a little money for me, ſince it cannot poſſibly inconvenience you in the leaſt; nay, I'll pay the intereſt myſelf. So I ſhall ſend Robert to Bangrove, to deſire he will be with you to-morrow morning."

And without waiting for an anſwer, ſhe retired to her own apartment.

A ſcheme now occurred to Louiſa, which, if ſhe could effect, would eſſentially ſerve her mother;

ther; and in a manner, without her being acceſſary to her ſquandering money at play. With ſuch a motive, ſhe no longer ſcrupled to incur a debt.

Preciſely at nine o'clock the next morning Bangrove arrived. Louiſa met him in the parlour, feeling a little embaraſſed how ſhe ſhould open this buſineſs, eſpecially as her communication would be rather matter of triumph to him, who had foretold the demands that would be made upon her, though without gaining much credit in her opinion, for his ſagacity.

"I am extremely full of buſineſs, Miſs Roſeville;" ſaid he, advancing, and bowing in his formal manner, "but you ſee, I immediately attend your commands—will you be pleaſed to ſignify to me what they are?"

"I believe, Sir," ſaid Louiſa, "you are not unacquainted with my mother's ſituation—it is a good deal diſtreſſed, and——"

"Yes, yes;" interrupted Bangrove, rubbing his hands, "diſtreſſed enough, I warrant it."

Louiſa continued, "and it hurts me extremely, to ſee her daily haraſſed by her creditors' applications. Now, Mr. Bangrove, encouraged by the frequent aſſurances I have received of your good will towards me, I have requeſted you to come hither, in order that I may conſult you, how to find

the means of removing the preſſure of theſe difficulties."

"So, ſo;" cried Bangrove, "all I foretold is come to paſs! But what would you have me do in this affair?"

"Why, you would oblige me exceedingly, if you would take the trouble to enquire into the ſtate of her debts, and raiſe for me a ſufficient ſum of money to diſcharge the demands of the needy trades people, particularly of thoſe who have large families; others that are more opulent, may wait till I come of age, when it is my intention to clear my mother entirely; and this, if you think fit, you may communicate to them."

Bangrove's eyes had conſiderably expanded during this ſpeech, and his mouth had gradually opened." "Lord help you, Madam!" cried he, "What are you going to do? Can a lady of your prudence, conceive ſuch an abſurd idea, as that of paying Lady Roſeville's debts! Why, dear me! you have no notion of their amount; and I muſt crave pardon for ſaying, that it is an ill-judged thing for a young lady, who is a minor, to be contracting debts; I thought I had ſufficiently cautioned you againſt the arts that would be practiſed upon you; but I perceive they have been but too effectual.

Let me entreat you, Madam, have nothing to

do

do with her concerns; ſhe may apply to her Sir Ralph Random; an old bachelor like him, has nothing better to do with his money, than to ſupply the old lady's extravagance: but, for *you*, Miſs Roſeville to do it, would be ſtrange indeed! I ſhould be glad to know what Doctor Sandolph would ſay to this fine ſcheme; ſurely it does not meet with his approbation; Lady Roſeville has not wheedled him into it?"

Louiſa, in her zeal to ſerve her mother, had not reflected on what judgment Doctor Sandolph would paſs on this occaſion; but the moment Bangrove mentioned his name, ſhe was ſtruck with the impropriety of undertaking ſuch a buſineſs, without his knowledge and concurrence.

She therefore ſaid, ſhe would reflect further, and wait till Doctor Sandolph arrived, before ſhe determined what meaſures to take.

Bangrove, very well pleaſed, that he had at leaſt delayed the execution of her plan, ſaid, as he was preparing to depart, "do you know, Madam, I have been planning as well as yourſelf; but my ſcheme has a different tendency than yours, for it would enrich, inſtead of impoveriſhing you: in ſhort, Miſs Roſeville, I think it is a great pity, that a match could not be brought about, between you and young Mr. Roſeville. Sir Charles ſtill caſts a wiſhful eye on your Kentiſh eſtate; but

when I ſounded him upon this ſubject, I did not find him at all agreeable to it."

"Good Heaven! Is it poſſible, Mr. Bangrove," cried Louiſa, "that you ſhould of your own accord, hint ſuch a thing to Sir Charles? You really amaze me!"

"Why ſo, Madam? I ſee no harm done; I only hinted this as a thought of my own—you ave (as I am told) refuſed the Iriſh Lord, and the Engliſh one is in a manner diſpoſed of; therefore, how can you do better, than marry your couſin, who will have ſuch a fine fortune?"

"I have no thoughts of marrying at all;" cried Louiſa, who had coloured very much at Bangrove's concluſions; "and if ever I have, I ſhall not need Mr. Bangrove's interference"—and without waiting to hear his apology, which he ſeemed preparing, ſhe ſlightly courteſied to him, and retired.

Lady Roſeville, full of impatience to know what ſucceſs her daughter had had in her application to Bangrove, no ſooner heard her ſtep upon the ſtairs, than ſhe called her into the drawing-room.

But Louiſa, unwilling to enter into any poſitive engagement, till ſhe had Doctor Sandolph's permiſſion, declined going into any detail of what had paſſed, only giving Lady Roſeville general aſ-

ſurances

ſurances of aſſiſtance, as ſoon as ſhe had conſulted with her guardian, what ſum of money might be advanced to her.

The diſſatisfaction, apparent in Lady Roſeville's countenance, and the vehement remonſtrance ſhe made againſt mentioning this buſineſs to Doctor Sandolph, who ſhe affirmed, hated her, and would certainly oppoſe any kind deſign formed in her behalf, chagrined Louiſa, without however altering her intention.

But in the courſe of her walk that morning, ſhe made ſome purchaſes of trifles, that ſhe knew Lady Roſeville had long coveted, intending to preſent them to her as a peace offering.

On her return home, ſhe learned that her mother was out, and had ſent her carriage to fetch her to Lady Bridget Wilford's, whither ſhe deſired ſhe would come immediately. Louiſa had not ſeen Lady Bridget very lately, for ſhe had been in the country with her nephew, who ſhe imagined ſtill to be there. She haſtened to obey her mother's ſummons, wondering however at the cauſe of this urgent meſſage, which was ſoon explained, little to her ſatisfaction; for when ſhe arrived at Lady Bridget's, after being ſhewn into the drawing-room, which to her ſurprize, ſhe found empty, the moment the ſervant diſappeared, a door of

an inner apartment flew open, and Lord Pompouſton ſtrutted into the room.

No ſight that ſhe could have ſeen, would have been ſo diſagreeable to her, and ſhe immediately thought of eſcaping; but he took her reluctant hand. "After having," ſaid he, "vainly endeavoured to reconcile myſelf to your cruel deciſion, I am come to enquire, whether, upon reflection, you can perſiſt in your refuſal of ſuch a man as me?" with a ſide look at the glaſs, his head proudly elevating as he ſpoke.

"All reflections upon this ſubject would have been uſeleſs;" anſwered Louiſa, "and I muſt requeſt the favour of your Lordſhip, to conſider my anſwer as final."

"I cannot poſſibly take it as ſuch;—in ſhort, I have not given up my hopes, neither will I give them up. And, by my ſoul! I ſwear you ſhall be mine."

Louiſa ſmiled, and ſhook her head doubtingly.

"Inſult me not, Madam, for I will not bear it; but remember, that I tell you, you muſt be my wife; nay, don't attempt to ſtir, for I am determined to profit by this opportunity, and at leaſt you ſhall hear me."

"I came hither, Lord Pompouſton," ſaid Louiſa, exceedingly angry, but afraid to provoke him, "by my mother's deſire, to meet her; but,

but, as ſhe is not here, I muſt beg leave to wiſh your Lordſhip a good day."

"No, no; I can't part with you indeed; my eyes may not again be ſo delighted for a long while."

Louiſa, more and more diſcompoſed, and quite frightened by his ardent gaze, thought only how ſhe might, ſpeedily and peaceably, get from him.

He perceived her intention, and poſted himſelf againſt the door, upon which Louiſa opened that which led to the adjoining room, and was going into it, when he caught her in his arms: her terror now encreaſed; in vain ſhe tried to diſengage herſelf from his graſp, promiſing that ſhe would conſent to ſee him in the preſence of Lady Roſeville, or Lady Bridget; but Lord Pompouſton inſiſted, that no time was like the preſent." "I ſhould be a curſed fool indeed," cried he, "if I let you go. I know well enough, that at this moment you hate and deteſt me: if, however, you will contradict this, and ſay you love me, I will let you go; not elſe."

"Love you!" cried Louiſa, "this is too much!" and ſhe burſt into tears, proteſting ſhe would alarm the houſe, and ſhe ſet up a violent ſcream, which brought Miſs Benſley from above ſtairs, who came running into the room. "Lord bleſs me! what's the matter? I cou'd not think

who was here—dear Miſs Roſeville! Why, are you crying?"

"Go, go;" cried Lord Pompouſton, "nothing is the matter; Miſs Roſeville, and I have ſome affairs to ſettle, therefore pray take yourſelf away."

"Whether I was trepanned hither," ſaid Louiſa, recovering herſelf, "for the purpoſe of meeting your Lordſhip, I know not; but of this you may be certain, that I ſhall not readily forgive your daring to inſult me; and that as long as I live, I never will ſee you again, if I can help it."

Lord Pompouſton, who had looſened his hold, on the abrupt entrance of Miſs Benſley, could no longer prevent her departure; and ſhe got away without difficulty, in a moſt perturbed ſtate of mind.

By Lady Roſeville's non-appearance, Louiſa had too much reaſon to think ſhe had connived at this meeting between her, and her odious lover; and there appeared ſomething ſo baſe in this, knowing, as ſhe did, her daughter's ſentiments, that ſhe could not reflect upon it, without indignation.

On her arrival in Portman-ſquare, Lady Roſeville pretended to complain violently, that ſhe had kept her waiting near an hour, in Welbeck-ſtreet; and that her patience being at length exhauſted,

hauſted, ſhe had gone with Lady Bridget to the exhibition.

Though Louiſa was in her own mind, convinced that her meeting with Lord Pompouſton had not been accidental, ſhe dared not on mere ſurmiſe, accuſe her mother of having contrived it. She therefore contented herſelf with ſimply relating what had paſſed, and her reſolution in conſequence.

This had no other effect on Lady Roſeville, than to produce ſome ſhrugs of her ſhoulders, and ſuch exclamations, as ridiculous! prudiſh! and abſurd!

Louiſa, now ſeemed threatened with a renewal of Lord Pompouſton's perſecutions, with leſs hopes than ever of their being diſcountenanced by her mother; ſince ſhe could, without reſentment, liſten to her account of his behaviour, and err ſo ſtrangely, as rather to blame her prudery, than his inſolence; ſhe had too much reaſon to apprehend, that her mother was as little intereſted in her honour, as ſhe had long ſhewn herſelf in her happineſs; and ſhe felt it neceſſary henceforth, cautiouſly to watch her proceedings. But how painful is it to an amiable diſpoſition, to diſtruſt a parent!

And ſuſpecting that Lady Roſeville's eagerneſs to induce her to go that evening to Lady Daſh-

away's aſſembly, was only to promote another interview between her and Lord Pompouſton; ſhe reſolutely declined going thither, and went to Mrs. Raby, at whoſe requeſt ſhe continued her little narration.

"Some countrymen of Prince *Ormanzoff*, arrived at Spa; and engaged him, though not without difficulty, to join them in a party to *Duſſeldorf*, *Bonn*, &c. The evening before his departure, he attended my grandmother and ſelf, on a walk in the *promenade de ſept heures*. There had been a ſtorm in the morning, and it was one of thoſe charming ſoft evenings that often follow; Nature ſeemed after a violent effort, to repoſe; not a leaf ſtirred; the lime trees in bloſſom, exhaled a delicious odour; the ſky was tinged with a purple glow, which inſenſibly faded away, while the riſing moon appeared ſtruggling to break through ſome amber clouds, and caſt a faded light around. Some peaſants returning from their daily labour, were aſcending the mountain cloſe by; and not unmelodiouſly, though in rude ſtrains, ſinging a favourite air. A few people were ſtill in the walk, but we knew them not. The Prince was penſive and ſilent——"

"You are very circumſtantial in your deſcription," ſaid Mrs. Raby with a ſmile, interrupting her.

"I be-

" I believe," returned Louiſa, " that the images of perſons and things, are ſo cloſely connected in our minds, eſpecially if any particular event has impreſſed them ſtrongly, that it is ſeldom, but they recur at the ſame inſtant in the memory. But to return to the Prince; he was unuſually dejected; at laſt he broke ſilence, by ſaying, he hoped to find us at Spa when he returned. " But," continued he, " ſhould ſome unfortunate event prevent my ſeeing you again, will you promiſe not entirely to forget me?"

" Forget you, Sir! " cried I, " it is impoſſible I ſhould be ſo ungrateful."

" Alas! Madam," ſaid he, you ſpeak with the warmth of an amiable young perſon, whoſe heart is yet untainted by the world. When you have lived as long as myſelf, you will perceive how little ſolidity there is in the human mind. The gratification of the preſent moment, ſeems alone conſidered: we like people while they amuſe us, but, as ſoon as we loſe ſight of them, they are thought of no more; and we ſeek again for freſh objects of attachment, who, in their turn, are forgotten. So do not think me a *miſanthrope*; 'tis from experience I ſpeak. I was not much older than you are now, when I fondly believed the eternity of love and friendſhip; but in both I have been miſerably deceived.——A beautiful woman, who

had even ſomething of your air, an Engliſh woman too, gained my heart, ſtill more by her ſeducing arts than by her beauty: I adored her with all the enthuſiaſm of youth, and ſtrong paſſions. She was not inſenſible. Would to God ſhe had been ſo! How much miſery ſhould I have eſcaped! Nineteen revolving years have not ſufficed to reſtore me to myſelf——Her broken faith! Her baſe conduct are engraven here!" laying his hand on his breaſt. "But, pardon me, Miſs Roſeville for thus obtruding my ſorrows upon you; the recital of them is not fit for your ear. Adieu! ladies, ſaid he, addreſſing us both; allow me thus to take my leave; and with a reſpectful air, he took our hands, and juſt touched them with his lips.

"Poor man!" ſaid Lady Roſeville, as he vaniſhed from our ſight, "he is unhappy; ſome ſecret grief preys upon him. I am glad he is going on a party of pleaſure; it may amuſe, and cheer his mind."

Alas! my dear Emily, we ſaw him no more; an epidemical diſorder raged at *Bonn*, and carried him off in the courſe of a few days. This was the firſt ſorrow I knew, and it preſſed ſorely upon me. *Lambin*, his ſervant, came after his beloved maſter's deceaſe, to collect his effects, and ſettle his affairs; his firſt and moſt urgent buſineſs was, however,

however, to call upon us, to fulfil the Prince's laſt commands. He brought my grandmother this letter, and me the Prince's picture—"

Louiſa then produced a ſhagreen caſe, enclo-ſing a miniature, richly ſet with diamonds; which Mrs. Raby ſurveyed with admiration, while a tear trickled down her friend's cheek.

"What an enchanting countenance!" ſaid ſhe. "Really, Louiſa, I think theſe eyes are juſt like your own, and ſo I proteſt is the mouth! Well, I am convinced that a ſecret ſympathy would in time have created a paſſion between two perſons ſo alike. May I read the letter?"

Louiſa ſilently aſſented.

To LADY ROSEVILLE.

"MADAM,

"I ſnatch an interval from pain, to take a ſolemn farewell of your Ladyſhip, and Miſs Roſe-ville. Alas! I had a fatal *preſentiment*, that I ſhould ſee you no more, when I left Spa.

"In regard to myſelf, this approaching diſſo-lution is not to be regretted; it is a releaſe from ſecret miſery; yet, I own I began again to take ſome pleaſure in life, after I became acquainted with you, and your charming grand-daughter. I found in your ſociety ſuch benevolence of heart, ſuch

ſuch cultivated underſtandings, and ſuch elegant manners, that had life been granted to me, I could have wiſhed to have devoted the reſt of it to *you*, as a ſon, and to *her*, as a father; for lovely as ſhe is, no wiſh of a more tender appellation, found place in my breaſt.

"My weakneſs encreaſes. I had intended to have taken the liberty of unburthening myſelf to your Ladyſhip, but I find the taſk too much. Should you have any curioſity to know ſome particulars of my life, you will find a few looſe papers, the effuſions of a troubled mind, in the little cedar box, which *Lambin* has my orders to deliver to you. I ſhould not wiſh theſe papers to fall into the hands of my family; in yours, Madam, they will be ſafe.

The few moments I have got to breathe, muſt be ſpent in the duties of my religion. Ah! had I never forgotten them, I ſhould have cloſed my eyes without a pang!

"May God Almighty bleſs you, and the amiable Miſs Roſeville! is the laſt prayer of your dying friend,

FREDERICK ALEXIS ORMANZOFF."

The concluſion of this letter was almoſt illegible.

"You

" You may imagine," ſaid Louiſa, " that we did not peruſe this letter, without ſhedding many tears; but when the firſt impreſſion of our grief was a little effaced, we opened the box, and drew out ſome papers that ſeemed to have been written at different times, merely as a relief to his own mind, without any idea of their being ſeen by any eye but his own."

Louiſa then read what follows.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FRAGMENT.

"NOW that the effervescence of youth is over, and that my reason is no longer clouded by passion, I still think she was charming; but how unworthy to be loved by a heart like mine! Ah! Charlotte! perfidious Charlotte! early didst thou sow in my breast an invincible disgust to any connection with thy sex.

Can I forget that day, when returning from my ride on the banks of the Cam, I perceived her at the window; long had I marked her enchanting face; but only with the admiration due to beauty, till that fatal day, when with the air of heedless mirth, she flung me a bunch of roses. Then covered with blushes, yet laughing, she retired. This trifling incident fixed my fate. Certainly those roses were enchanted, for no sooner had I placed them in my bosom, than I felt an unknown passion creep upon me. My youth, my inexperience made me feel delighted to be distinguished by this lovely woman.

How anxious was I to gain access to her! her affected refusal to admit me, only whetted my impatience. How long every day appeared, 'till I got

I got introduced to her! At length I had my wiſh: would to God it had not been granted!

Methinks, I now ſee her bluſhing at my entrance, ſeated by the ſide of her old aunt, who paralytic, and almoſt ſuperanuated, let her do juſt what ſhe pleaſed. At that time, I remember I was charmed with her attentions to this woman; but, afterwards with grief I found, that they were only occaſional, and that too often ſhe neglected her.

But in the commencement of our acquaintance, ſhe fatally reſolved nothing ſhould be wanting to enſnare me. Hence, that aſſumed ſoftneſs, thoſe winning manners, and bewitching vivacity; hence, that affected ſenſibility, without which Venus herſelf, could not have charmed me.

Before I made this dangerous connection, my time had paſſed profitably, according to my father's wiſhes. A part had been devoted to ſtudy; a part employed in acquiring a knowledge of the laws, cuſtoms, and hiſtory of England, and of the country in general; and a part had been ſpent in travelling. I had viewed with delight its various beauties, from the cultivated *environs* of its capital; to the wild, but ſublime ſcenes of its moſt diſtant provinces. I had been received with diſtinction in poliſhed ſocieties; and young as I was, I had not been thought unworthy of the notice of the learned.

Now,

Now, what was the ſole object of my ambition to be noticed by Charlotte! By a girl of no family, poſſeſſed of no ſuperior talents, and already paſſed her firſt bloom.

I am convinced that my exterior at preſent, is not more different from what it was at that period, than is my interior; for at this moment, my infatuation for this woman appears incomprehenſible to myſelf.

What could it be then that bewitched me towards her?—Not her beauty—for ſome had ſuperior attractions—Not her underſtanding; that, though naturally good, was little cultivated—But it was the fond belief that I was neceſſary to her exiſtence; that ſhe lived only for me; that her love was as pure and as ardent as my own.

Content with paſſing with her every moment I could ſteal from my ſtudies, or eſcape from the troubleſome repreſentations of my tutor, I enjoyed the preſent, without thinking of the future—I dared not aſk myſelf how this would end; I felt I ought not to marry her, and my principles forbade me to think of diſhonouring the woman I loved.

Six months had thus paſſed in mutual confidence, and in an interchange of thoſe little attentions, that a delicate heart knows ſo well how to appreciate.

She had a friend, who lived almoſt entirely with her;

her; but ſhe was diſcreet; and under the pretence of attending the old aunt, ſhe let us frequently enjoy pretty long *tête-à-têtes*. Charlotte's doors were ſhut to every man but myſelf; the preſence of any ſtranger would have been inſupportable to me; nor could I even bear to walk out with my beloved, becauſe ſhe was ſure to be joined by her acquaintance. I hated to ſpeak to any other woman, and I could not endure her noticing any other man than myſelf. I have ſince thought, now that I am no ſtranger to her real diſpoſition, how much I muſt have incommoded her; but at that time ſhe diſſembled ſo well, I did not perceive it.

From this tranquil happy ſtate, I was rouzed by a letter from my father, who being appointed Embaſſador to the court of Verſailles, reminded me, that the two years he had permitted me to paſs in England, had been ſome time elapſed, and that he deſired he might find me at Paris when he arrived. I could not refuſe to comply with my father's requeſt; neither could I bear the thoughts of tearing myſelf from Charlotte.

Methinks ſhe is now before me, bathed in tears, as I then ſaw her, when I imparted to her this fatal letter. How often did ſhe not ſwear, that ſhe would follow me; that ſhe could not live without me!—Perfidious woman!—In vain I tried to ſooth her,

her, to calm her, by the aſſurance that I would immediately return, after I had ſeen my father, and obtained his conſent to paſs a longer time in England.

"You talk idly, my friend," cried ſhe, "you will not be permitted to return; this is not the ſphere in which you are deſtined to ſhine; born to inherit honours and riches, you muſt fulfil your deſtiny; and the unhappy Charlotte will be left to her own forlorn ſtate; while, perhaps, you will ſcarcely remember ſhe ever exiſted, and beſtow your hand on ſome woman of your own country, whoſe high birth, and ample fortunes, may ſatisfy your ambition; but deceive not yourſelf, Alexis; your heart, formed for tenderneſs, may ſtill, amidſt your ſplendor, be diſſatisfied."

"Nothing of this will happen," anſwered I; "my father is indulgent, and he will allow me to remain as long in England as I chooſe; perhaps, indeed, he may require me to paſs ſome time with him at Paris; but the diſtance hence is ſo inconſiderable, that I may ſteal a viſit to my Charlotte, who has no cauſe to apprehend any rival, as I am ready to bind myſelf by the moſt ſolemn oath, that if I cannot marry her, I never will any other woman."

"And why is it ſo impoſſible that you ſhould marry your Charlotte?" ſaid ſhe, putting my hand

to

to her lips; "am I unworthy of the honour of being your wife?"

"You are worthy of a throne," replied I, paſſionately; "but my angel knows that I cannot diſpoſe of myſelf. In England, a father's conſent would be ſufficient, but it is otherwiſe in my country—*That* is ruled by a deſpotic power; and were I to contract an union, without the permiſſion of my ſovereign, my eſtate might be confiſcated; and my father would perhaps participate in my diſgrace. Beſides too (though it pains me to avow it) I cannot hope that my family would ever ſuffer me to unite myſelf to you, all amiable as you are. Were I an Engliſhman, I would prefer you to every woman in the world."

"Thus treacherous lovers always talk!" cried Charlotte, withdrawing her hand from mine; "they can eaſily find obſtacles to oppoſe, what they do not ſecretly wiſh. You deſpiſe me, Alexis; I know you do."

"Deſpiſe you! Good God! How can you be ſo unjuſt? If ever there exiſted a fervent paſſion, aſſuredly it does in my heart."

"No, no," cried ſhe, "it is in vain you pretend to deceive me; you love me not;"—and ſhe burſt into tears.

"Extremely moved at this ſight, I threw myſelf at her feet, and with the moſt paſſionate expreſſions,

ſions, endeavoured to prove my ſincerity. Charlotte ſtill wore an air of doubt, and ſhe called Miſs Watkyns from the adjoining chamber, to prevent my having an opportunity of converſing longer with her.

On my return home, I meditated on this converſation. I found Charlotte doubted of my love; and ſo tenderly did I adore her, that I began to conſider whether it would be poſſible privately to marry her.

What conflicts did I not then endure between love and reaſon! At laſt the latter prevailed; and for two days I reſtrained myſelf from going to Charlotte. Gracious powers! what torment I ſuffered during this age (for ſuch it appeared to me.) Unable longer to bear it, I flew to the object of my adoration, without having poſitively determined how to act; but no ſooner did I ſee her, than all my irreſolution ceaſed.

I tried to perſuade myſelf that my father's indulgent diſpoſition might be prevailed upon to accede to my wiſhes; but to win him over, I knew it would be neceſſary to plead my cauſe in perſon, and I reſolved to haſten to Paris, that I might meet him on his arrival.

No ſooner had I communicated this determination to Charlotte, who had received me with a gloomy air, than ſhe threw herſelf into my arms,

and

and in the tendereſt manner aſſured me of her joy.

I was to ſet out in the courſe of ten days, which were were paſſed with Charlotte, in mutual vows of love and conſtancy. How many delightful plans we formed for the future! Can I forget with what feigned tranſport ſhe accepted of my picture, and gave me hers in return. How did ſhe ſeem to prize the trifles I preſented to her for the ſake of the donor! Accurſed art! but I will not think of it.

The night preceding my departure, I ſupped with her, and her friend, Miſs Watkyns; the latter withdrew, that I might, without reſtraint, bid my love farewell. Alas! alas! her departure plunged me into an abyſs of guilt, that I ſhall ever lament. My paſſions were violent—Charlotte was charming; ſhe was tender too. I already conſidered her as my wife, and ſhe forgot that I was not her huſband.

But I will not dwell upon this ſcene, nor yet upon the agonies I endured, when, at break of day, I tore myſelf from the arms of the bewitching Charlotte, leaving her diſſolved in tears, to join *Soldakin* my governor.

I travelled with ſuch expedition, that the intenſe heat of the weather gave me a fever, which came on ſo ſeverely, that *Soldakin* would not let me proceed

ceed further than *Montreuil*. There for ſix weeks I lay dangerouſly ill, raving of Charlotte. As ſoon as my head became clear, I eagerly read her letters; they were tender, paſſionate, and ſoothing to my ſoul—deceitful woman!

My impatience to continue my journey retarded my recovery, and a freſh vexation enſued; two mails had arrived, and no letter from my Charlotte. I concluded, however, that I ſhould certainly find one at Paris; and to prevent her being uneaſy at my ſhort unintelligible ſcrawls, I told her that I had been ill, though not in danger.

At laſt, when I was but half recovered, I inſiſted on ſetting out, and *Soldakin* reluctantly conſented. The inſtant I arrived at Paris, I flew to the poſt-office, and found a letter, but not from Charlotte; it was from Miſs Watkyns. She informed me, that her friend was inconceivably wretched about me; that ſhe apprehended, from the ſtyle of my letters, a diminution of my affection; and that in the anguiſh of her ſoul, ſhe had confeſſed to her, all that had paſſed between us, and the alarming conſequences, that ſhe apprehended to herſelf.

This intelligence only ſerved to accelerate my wiſh of procuring my father's conſent; but though he had been expected for ſome time, he was not yet arrived: therefore, I could only quiet Char-

lotte with ſolemn aſſurances of unabated love and fidelity, and explain to her the cauſe of my ſhort incoherent ſcrawls, concluding with a promiſe of a ſpeedy return, that a marriage might take place before her character could be endangered. Every delicate term I could find, was employed to reconcile her to herſelf; I proteſted that ſhe had nothing to reproach herſelf with, and that I alone was to blame; and by calling her my wife, and aſſuring her I already conſidered her as ſuch, I flattered myſelf I ſhould tranquillize her mind.

Alas! how many weeks paſſed, without producing any letter from England! What a cruel period that was! And how did I torture my brain with various conjectures on the cauſe of this ſilence! Could any thing be more alarming?

Still I was detained in France by the expectation of ſeeing my father, from whom I received letters, fixing poſitively the day of his arrival.

I wrote repeatedly to Charlotte and her friend; at laſt I recognized Miſs Watkyns's hand; ſuch a tremour ſeized me, that I could ſcarcely tear the letter open—and here let me pauſe—I cannot even now bear to think of the contents—I muſt lay down my pen."

The letter was pinned to the paper.

To Prince Frederick Alexis Ormanzoff.

" Sir,

" IT gives me pain, that I muſt be the perſon to give you ſome diſagreeable, and unexpected information.

" Juſt after I wrote to you laſt, a gentleman, whoſe name it is needleſs to mention, ſaw Charlotte at an aſſembly in this town, and fell violently in love with her—I muſt acknowledge, ſhe gave him but too much encouragement—I will not wound you with the particulars of this affair, but come quickly to its concluſion—Charlotte was poſſeſſed with the belief, that you no longer loved her, and that you had never ſeriouſly meant to marry her: ſhe conſidered too, that if you did mean it, your father certainly would prevent you; and then her heart failed her, at the neceſſity ſhe ſhould be under, of renouncing her native country, all her friends and connections here, to follow you to diſtant regions, as yet but half civilized; be expoſed perhaps to the contempt of your relations, and be ſubject to the arbitrary will of your Sovereign, who might exile her in Siberia.

" To theſe conſiderations, ſhe oppoſed the advantages offered her, by a young handſome Engliſhman, heir to a title, and a large fortune: in ſhort,

ſhort, Sir, he was on the ſpot to plead his cauſe; imagine then how irreſiſtible his arguments became! her ſituation too might be ſuſpected; ſo ſhe reſolved to loſe no time in haſtening with him to Scotland.

"This youth (who is no more than eighteen) blinded by paſſion, had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the cauſe of her immediate compliance with his propoſal; tranſported with joy, he carried her off, and they were married at Gretna Green.

"I hear his family are exceedingly angry (though they are ignorant of *all* the reaſons they have to be ſo.) Her want of fortune, and her inferior birth, are leſs objections to them, than ſome reports, not much to her credit, that circulate at Cambridge.

"Though I greatly diſapproved of her conduct, I ſtill love her;—time, I hope, will reconcile her huſband's relations to her; and time will reconcile you to her loſs!

"Nothing will conduce more to this end, than the reflection, that whatever love ſhe once bore you, is now entirely extinguiſhed. I underſtand, likewiſe, that the tie, which might have kept alive ſome portion of the tenderneſs ſhe once felt for you, no longer remains; this proof of her frailty will never ſee the light. Forget her, then,

and believe me, Sir, with ſincere commiſeration for the grief this letter will occaſion,

" Your moſt humble ſervant,

" JANE WATKYNS."

The remainder of the fragment ſeemed written many years after the reception of this letter.

" I can now, with more compoſure, recall to my mind paſt events—time has blunted ſomewhat of the edge of my ſorrow, though a cold ſhiver ſtill creeps through my veins, when I recollect what I felt in reading Miſs Watkyns's cruel letter! how unfeelingly did ſhe pierce my heart! her fatal intelligence appeared like a frightful dream, yet, the horrid paper I had before my eyes, would not allow me to believe it ſuch. Perhaps, ſaid I, ſome vile treachery lurks beneath it—Miſs Watkyns, for ſome baſe reaſon, unknown to me, has traduced her friend. Charlotte, my beloved Charlotte, cannot be ſo infamous! Even, were ſhe capable of infidelity, ſhe could not ſo ſuddenly have conſented to marry a man, almoſt a ſtranger to her, after her plighted vows to me. How could ſhe endure the idea, the horrid idea, of carrying the pledge of our loves into another family, and impoſing it upon her huſband as his iſſue! But, alas! ſhe has perhaps only eſcaped this crime, by the commiſſion of another, that I dare not

not think of! yet, what will not a woman do, to avoid ſhame? and it is now too late to unravel this myſtery.

Then ſuddenly reproaching myſelf, I exclaimed, wretch that I am, to credit this infamous ſtory! Charlotte! my beloved Charlotte! forgive my vile credulity—you are innocent; my heart tells me you are ſo—I will fly to you this minute, and throw myſelf at your feet—ah! if you do but ſmile upon me, I ſhall believe you innocent. Then relapſing again into fury, I ſwore I would verify her conduct, and ſhould I find her falſe, expoſe her to infamy.

Frantic with rage and deſpair, I was juſt getting into my chaiſe, on the point of quitting Paris, when my father arrived; he mildly prevented my purpoſe, enquired into the cauſe of my agitation, and I did not attempt to conceal it from him.

Inſtead of ſeverely reprobating my conduct, he endeavoured to ſooth my ſorrows; to prevail on me to ſuſpend them, at leaſt till I was ſure of my misfortune. This was not the moment for him to ſhew his diſapprobation of the connection I had formed; he contented himſelf with ſaying, that he would wait on the Engliſh Miniſter, and obtain, through his means, the moſt authentic information. In the mean while, he procured the

Engliſh papers—they gave a circumſtantial detail of Charlotte's elopement.

Still I wiſhed to be credulous: I wrote to ſome of my college friends; their anſwers, added to thoſe the Engliſh miniſter had received, took from me all poſſibility of doubting of my wretchedneſs.

I ſunk beneath the ſtroke; a ſlow fever conſumed me; and it was a long while before I could liſten to my father's repreſentations, who gently hinted, that ſo far from abandoning myſelf to grief, I ought to bleſs my good fortune in having eſcaped ſuch a diſhonourable connection. "By your account," ſaid he, "this woman muſt have been as frail, as ſhe was fair; and ſhe has probably ſeduced this young man to marry her, by the ſame arts which ſhe practiſed upon you; her want of birth and fortune, I might have overlooked, had ſhe been worthy of my ſon, by the purity of her mind. I will forgive the paſt, and conſider it as the imprudence of a boy; but I charge you, as you value my future favour, never to beſtow a thought from this moment, on ſo unworthy an object."

I promiſed to obey, upon condition that I might be allowed to quit Paris, and travel till I could regain my tranquillity. I could not refuſe to indulge myſelf once more, in talking of this ungrateful

grateful woman; ſo I made a ſecret journey to Calais, where I prevailed on Miſs Watkyns to meet me. From her, I learnt all the particulars of Charlotte's perfidy, and that *I* alone had been ignorant of the lightneſs of her character; in ſhort, I found I had been completely duped; for that ſhe was ſo well known at Cambridge, that ſhe had paſſed her thirtieth year, without any of her lovers thinking of her as a wife. That ſhe had hoped to have drawn me into an immediate marriage; this was the motive of that conſummate art, which ſhe had diſplayed in her pretended paſſion for me.

She added, that the gentleman ſhe had married, was very amiable; and for a time poſſibly ſhe might love him; that he and his bride were gone to reſide in the North of England. Miſs Watkyns went and lived there alſo; and from that time, I have neither heard any thing of her, or of the perfidious Charlotte.

I bluſh to own, that my paſſion for this unworthy object was ſo woven into my heart, that not even a perfect conviction of her baſeneſs could entirely deſtroy it. I ſtill ſee her inſidious ſmiles; I ſtill hear the tender language ſhe addreſſed to me; and I ſtill remember with emotion what I felt, if I accidentally touched her hand. Other diſappointments ſince, nearly as cruel, have ulcerated

my

my heart—*Moldaſkin*'s breach of friendſhip! How baſely he betrayed the ſecrets I depoſited in his breaſt!"

The reſt was in the Ruſſian language.

"Both my grandmother and ſelf were affected by the peruſal of this paper; yet we thought the poor Prince's exceſſive ſenſibility had aggravated his misfortunes, at leaſt ſo far as regarded Charlotte. What others he met with, we know not, being unable to read the Ruſſian fragment."

"The Prince's paſſion," ſaid Mrs. Raby, "would have been juſtifiable, had it been inſpired by a worthy object; but a man of his delicacy, to love ſuch a creature as Charlotte, is to me quite incomprehenſible."

"'Tis true; but conſider his youth, her arts, and the violent paſſions he ſeemed to poſſeſs."

"Well, I am convinced," ſaid Mrs. Raby, "that he was on the point of loving a ſecond time."

"I am ſure you are miſtaken; he only regarded me as a daughter; remember the diſparity of our years."

"Pſhaw! love levels ages, as well as conditions. But tell me, could you never diſcover whom Charlotte married?"

"That was abſolutely impoſſible, for the Prince had the diſcretion not to put any ſurname in his frag-

fragment, except that of Watkyns—yet I own I felt ſome curioſity to know the perſon, whom Charlotte could prefer to my amiable friend; and once or twice I perceived that Lady Roſeville pauſed, while ſhe was reading the paper, and continued penſive for ſome time; but ſhe never communicated to me what occupied her thoughts.

We had now ſtaid at Spa as long as ſhe had intended, and had no inducement to continue in a place, where ſo many objects reminded us of our poor friend.

We therefore returned to *Chaillot*; and had the grief to learn, on our arrival, that the worthy *Sobrin* was no more. We both lamented him ſincerely; he was good and learned, and much pains had he taken in my education. Theſe loſſes had lowered my ſpirits, and rendered me uncommonly affected at parting with my dear grandmother, when as uſual ſhe left me for the winter, to paſs it in the South of France.

Three times ſhe embraced me, and three times I ran after her, to take another farewell. "Bleſs me once more," cried I, "my dear mama! (for ſo I called her) bleſs your Louiſa—Heaven will liſten to your prayers."

I do bleſs you, my child," cried ſhe, a tear trickling down her reverend cheek; "I pray to God inceſſantly for my Louiſa's happineſs. Remember,

member, my child, that you muſt yourſelf promote the accompliſhment of whatever good Heaven deigns to deſign you, by retaining an unſullied chearful mind. No calamity this world can inflict, can ever make you totally unhappy, if you are conſcious, that you have not brought it upon yourſelf, by your own miſconduct. I hope in a few months to return to you; but ſhould it pleaſe God to order otherwiſe, you muſt ſubmit with pious reſignation. Doctor Sandolph, in this caſe, will be a father to you; he is a moſt reſpectable man, and as capable, as willing, to conduct you properly through life. You have a mother; but, alas!—I dare not recommend you to have much confidence in her. Yet treat her, if ever you become acquainted with her, with the reſpect due to the ſacred name of mother. Adieu, my love; adieu!"

Louiſa's tears had for ſome time altered her ſpeech, and now ſhe could proceed no longer; a few ſympathetic drops fell from Mrs. Raby's eyes. At laſt, after a ſhort pauſe, ſhe ſaid,

"I have little more to ſay, my dear Emily; my poor grandmother was ſeized on her journey with the gout in her ſtomach, and died after two hours illneſs at Lyons. Very fortunately, Doctor Sandolph happened to be there at the time; he was returning from Italy with Lord William S. He cloſed my beloved grandmother's eyes; and having

having performed the laſt ſad duties, haſtened to Paris, to break the melancholy tidings to me. I need not dwell upon this ſcene; you know how tenderly I ſtill lament that dear parent, and you will gueſs what my feelings muſt have been!

Doctor Sandolph left me not, 'till he ſaw me a little compoſed; then he haſtened to England with Lord William, promiſing that he would ſoon return, and carry me thither, when he had ſettled how to diſpoſe of me. He thought it probable (and the event has juſtified his opinion) that my mother would oppoſe my reſiding with him, and inſiſt upon my living with her. You know ſhe did ſo, and that Doctor Sandolph reluctantly reſigned me to her care."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.